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CENSORED!

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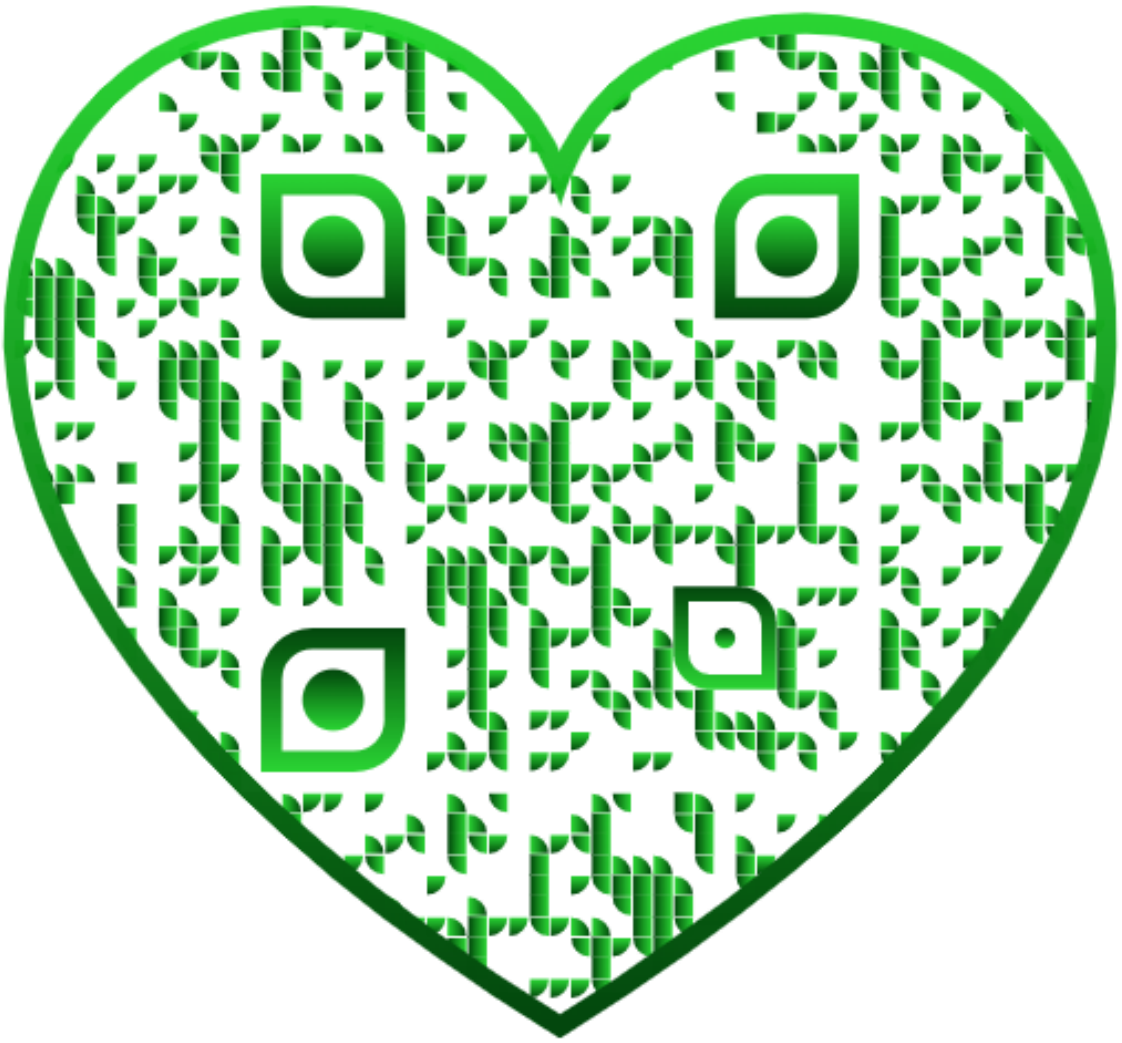

IRON MAIDEN

SEVENTH SON OF A SEVENTH SON

Includes

CAN I PLAY WITH MADNESS

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METAL

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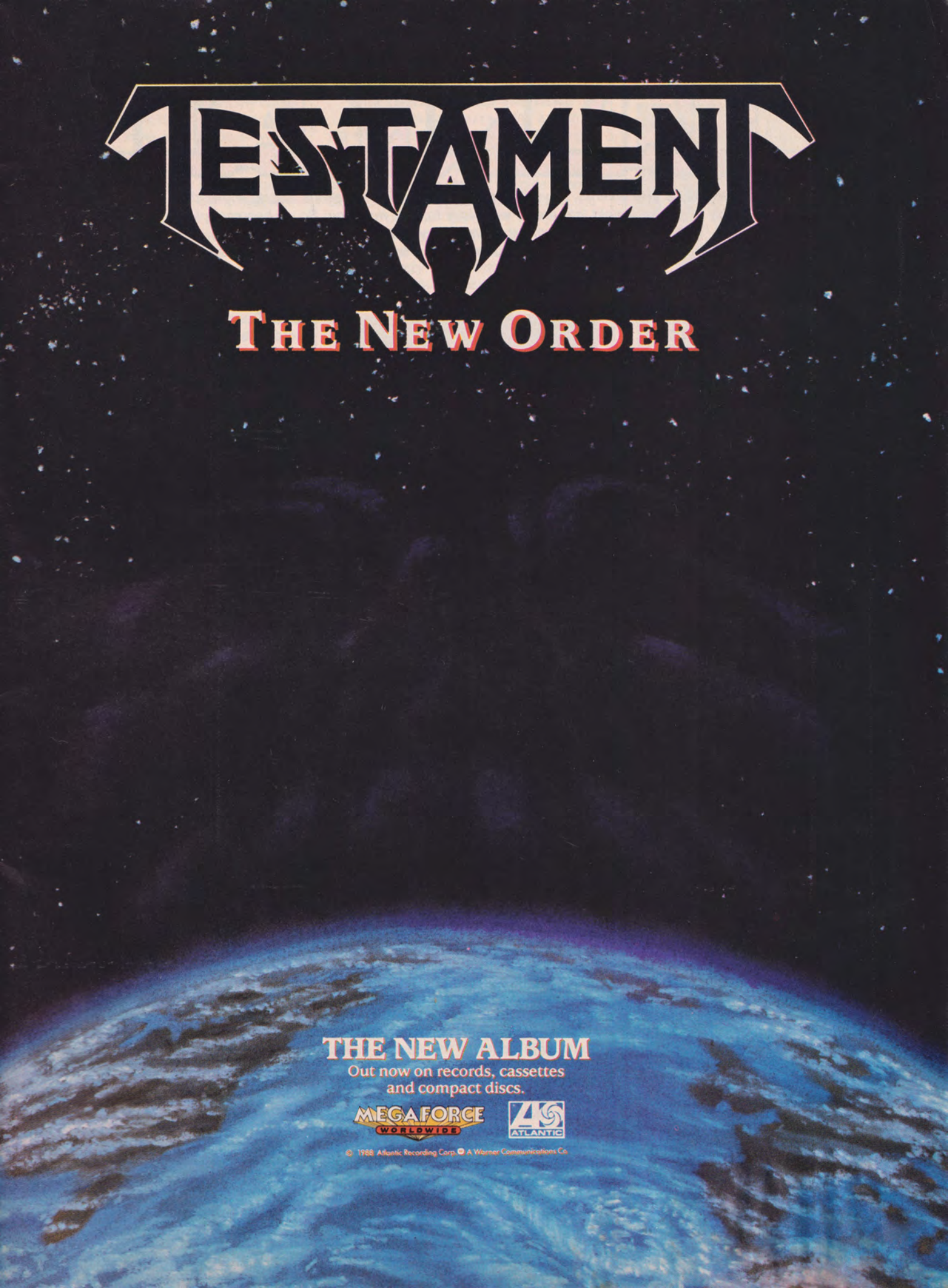
Photo by Mark Weiss/MWA

Cover photo by Ross Halfin/Photofeatures

SLAYER

MARK WEISS/MWA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PHEW! NO CORRELATION BETWEEN ORAL ROBERTS & AIDS

To begin, I would like to congratulate you on your article, "A.I.D.S.: The Kiss Of Death." The article was clear and to the point without confusing the average reader. Information about AIDS should be more readily available to the general public. I was also impressed by the opinions of several of the musicians in the article. Whether it was through the work of the writer or just because some heavy metal musicians do have more than a 20-word vocabulary, the artists themselves came away sounding like intelligent people.

There is one sad exception to the intelligent opinions in the article. In his section, Michael Sweet of Stryper claims that AIDS is the judgement of God and that the Bible says homosexuality is wrong. First, I would like to know where Sweet gets his divine inspiration; maybe he should talk to Oral Roberts. Secondly, the Bible itself was written by *men*, not God—and would he kindly direct me to the passages where he finds his information? Once more, thank you for your wonderful article and keep up the excellent work.

Christine Morris
Brookfield, OH

HOW DO YOU THINK DAVID LEE ROTH FEELS?

Like any other normal teenage girl I dream about the day I'll be able to have sex with one of my favorite rock stars! But, now, because of AIDS, that dream has become a nightmare! All the rock stars are afraid of catching AIDS, so none of them will have sex with us girls who live and die for them! That really sucks! It's putting groupies out of business, and giving us nothing to dream about and hope for! What are we to do?

Life sure sucks
Milwaukee, WI

(Have you considered working in the world's oldest profession: locksmithing?—Ed.)

"GREASE" IS NO LONGER THE WORD

Being a rock 'n' roll type fiend from way back I figured it was about time to let my slightly demented, not to mention vaguely biased yet intellectual opinions be known to the free world. Stereotyping has not even one small place in the world of music. I think I've heard 'em and hated 'em all a hundred times. "Devil worshipping, drug abusing, metal mush-heads who don't know what's going on in the world!" listen up and have fun with some of this shit.

To say that Guns N' Roses suck because they look too much like Poison has nothing to do with the fact that they kick some serious ass. But Poison still sucks, regardless. To say that Megadeth are just Metallica clones does not mean that they don't write some of the coolest tunes known to mankind, as, of course, do Metallica. And to state that people like Tony MacAlpine, David T. Chastain, and Vinnie Moore are just jumping on the Yngwie bandwagon is a bit on the insane side. They all have their own original talents which make them stand out from the others. So basically, what I'm saying is "Let the music do the talking." I think someone else said that before but I never claimed to be an original, now did I? Oh, also, Queensryche is the greatest band to ever strike a note and in a couple of years Axis will be the only word in rock 'n' roll.

Terry
KAFB, MS

(Can "guacamole" be the only other word in rock 'n' roll?—Ed.)

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THE *TRUE* THRASH GOD IS NO JUDAS PRIEST FAN

Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Jesus Christ (yes, the same person who died on the Cross thousands of years ago). I really like your magazine and you may find this hard to believe, but I like thrash metal. I like thrash metal because it reminds me of my Father in heaven: God. The pace is lightning fast, the sound is thunderously loud and each concert is the equivalent of the fall of Babylon (it's that dramatic).

I would like to say to the person who thinks he was the first to ever see a Slayer concert that he wasn't the first one. I was. The first time I seen Slayer (and all other concèrts for that matter) was when my Apostles and I were walking up a hill to digest my Last Supper. I had a vision. I seen Jimi Hendrix play live at the Monterey Pop Festival along with other concert visions of Metallica, Trauma, Exodus, Venom, Celtic Frost and Slayer. The vision of Slayer was so intense that I was sweating blood. I returned to my Apostles only to find them asleep. I counted my 12 Apostles and there was only 11. I counted again, only to find my 12th Apostle (Judas) with Roman soldiers, who didn't look like they were glad to see me. You know the rest, so I won't get into it.

It's too bad that everybody thinks I don't like thrash metal. If you could only see the band that's been put together up here: Jim Morrison (vocals), Jimi Hendrix and Randy Rhoads (lead guitar), Keith Moon (drums), Cliff Burton (bass) with a special appearance by Janis Joplin. Not all of them are thrash metal, but it's the most heavenly line-up in the universe.

The thing that I'm getting tired of is that if you don't wear your hair short people assume that you're a criminal or a punk or you're just the black sheep of your family. Just for that, I've added the 11th commandment: thou shall wear long hair. It's too bad that people think thrash metal is satanic. My father, God, likes thrash metal because the lyrics are centered on the same issues that he dislikes (nuclear war, political scandals, drug abuse, etc.) and besides, Moses and all the other Holy Angels have fun doing the Milano Mosh. So with this in mind, how can you call thrash metal satanic? About the only satanic music that I've heard is glam rock because it lies to you. Glam rock groups are doing the same thing that evangelists do on TV (making money in the name of metal, when in fact, they don't believe in heavy metal). Glam rock is not heavy metal, and if you glamsters want to repent, get metallized. I suggest Exodus's *Bonded By Blood*. Take care, keep headbaning and we'll meet again on Judgment Day.

Jesus Christ
Pacifica, CA

(Yo, poseur! If you really *were that dude that art in heaven, you'd have the ultra-rad Karen Carpenter sittin' in on skins.—Ed.)*

CONSULTING EDITOR MISSES MEETING, WRITES INSTEAD

I just want to say you're doing a bitchen job with this magazine but Stryper has got to go! They all wear more make-up than most of the girls I know. Come to think of it, they *look* like most of the girls I know. Do you think they've ever heard of the saying "boys will be boys?" Anyway, if you need something else to fill in the blank pages here are some ideas: AC/DC, Ozzy, Aerosmith, Scorpions, Whitesnake and Metallica to name a few. I know that Led Zeppelin isn't heavy metal but a little more Zep will never hurt anyone.

Gloria Lloyd
Escondito, CA

BUT DO YOU KNOW THE MULTIPLICATION TABLES?

I'm a headbanger and proud of it!!! Most kids at my school say "First time 7th graders shouldn't listen to heavy metal. It's just for the older kids. You won't understand it! You're too young." Well, all I have to say to that is, "You're wrong!" I love heavy metal and always will. Like take Megadeth, Metallica, Motley Crue and Iron Maiden for instance. They are *all* great groups! All metal and all great. We also know what sucks! Like Saint, Bloodgood, Jesus Christ, Messiah Prophet and Bon Jovi! They are the groups who shouldn't even exist!! I, as a "first time" 7th grader have a right to listen to what I want!!! Also, I know what rules! Megadeth #1, Iron Maiden #2, Metallica #3! So to all you 8th and 9th grade heads from East Junior I say, "Go f--- yourself!!" Also, my boyfriend who is an 8th grade headbanger agrees totally with me!

Kelly Finger
Harrisburg, PA

TURN TO PAGE 59

BL'AST!

B'LAST!: The Power Of Expression. The first burst of the sonic salvo that is B'last! came in the form of the album The Power Of Expression. Forcing their way into the maw of pure, hard power, Blast rages on Surf And Destroy, Fucking With My Head and nine others. SST 148 (LP/CA $7.50 CD $15.00)

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Photos by (left) Annamaria DiSanto; (right) Mark Weiss/MWA

ROCK 'N' CENSORSHIP!

by Judy Wieder

What would rock 'n' roll sound and look like if censorship could actually have its misbegotten way?

Let us observe a moment of silence . . .

That's right, kids. You might as well store your ears and eyeballs in Ziploc bags because every wild, hilarious, sexual, angry, joyous, loud moment in the music you have come to call your own, would be short-circuited forever. What would rock 'n' roll be without rebellion, nose-thumbing and aggression? Not only Tipper Gore and the Washington Wives wanna know: the PMRC (Parents Music Resource Center) has acted in concert with the PTA, the Parents For A Drug-Free Youth and other like-minded organizations to press the censorship issue. So far, the record industry's resisted their efforts, but if you think it can't happen here, consider this: during the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln went so far as to jail the editors of certain Northern newspapers who disagreed with his war policies.

So much for the First Amendment.

Is the noisy, heavy metal surface of adolescence really something that *needs* censoring? Can the lyrics and attitudes or rock's renegade turbo-charged sounds really seduce someone into doing something destructive to society or themselves any more than, say, the violence on television or in football games? Is there any time or any reason when censorship could be a good thing? And if so, where do you draw the line? Does censorship such as "warning labels" on albums have the effect of getting kids *more* interested in both the product and the band?

METAL went to some of the affected bands for answers to these questions and discovered an intensity and thoughtfulness that's light years ahead of the moral majority mumbo-jumbo aimed at dismantling rock's powerful bond with youth.

And, in case you want to make your voice heard, you can do so by contacting Music In Action, a group of concerned industry people. They've been circulating a petition protesting the would-be censors' agenda, and can be contacted at Music In Action, 135 East 55th St., New York, NY 10022. Do it today.

Now, on to what the *musicians* say . . .

GREAT WHITE

JACK RUSSELL: "These people bitching and moaning about rock 'n' roll, have they forgotten how it was to be a kid? Don't they remember when they were 13 or 14 and everything their parents did or said was wrong and I do! Nothing's new. Nothing ever changes. I guess people always need a scapegoat for something or other. I mean, I'm waiting for someone to start blaming Biafra on rock 'n' roll. 'Yeah! They're starving in India (*Which, technically speaking, is 2,000 miles from Biafra—Ed.*) because of rock 'n' roll musicians! It must be because they're using the F-word in their songs.' I suppose it's true that somebody could be influenced in a negative way by something they heard or saw in rock 'n' roll, but if they really go out and kill someone or commit suicide, I think they were going to do that anyway. I mean, it's absurd to blame the music. Let's say I suddenly go out and kill 15 people. Then the police come and search my room for weird notes or clues to why I did it, and they see I have a Frank Sinatra record on my turntable. Then they notice the song, 'Come Fly With Me.' Right?! And they say: 'Aha! *That's* what he meant! That must have been what he was trying to tell us: Come fly with me! Of course!' That's silly! They're just using the music as a scapegoat. If you're unstable, you're unstable, like the killer who wore the AC/DC shirt. If you ask me, *they're just looking for easy answers!*"

Photos by (left) Mark Weiss/MVA, (right) Eddie Malluk

FASTER PUSSYCAT

TAIME DOWNE: "MTV wouldn't play our first video because it said: 'I got 12 inches of fun.' But that was just a lousy excuse. They're a bunch of assholes. Sure, they won't play you unless you become a hit. *Then they'll play you no matter what*! They're a bunch of hypocrites. We've had other kinds of censorship too. I think we were down in San Antonio and they told us not to swear onstage, so of course we did."

GREG STEELE: "Also, one time we were playing in Texas somewhere and there was a church across the street from the theatre. So they wouldn't put our name on the marquee. That thought it was too dirty. Isn't that amazing? I mean, that was in *Dallas*!"

TAIME: "The PMRC obviously hung themselves. They're just so stupid. Tipper Gore has got her head up her ass. No one listens to her anymore. Look how well her husband is doing in politics. The more they beat up on rock bands, the bigger they've made them. She's just digging her own grave."

GREG: "The thing that's really stupid is that they're making people feel like shit because they're saying: 'You're not smart enough to know that a lyric is just a lyric. The writer might be joking.' It makes people look stupid. Since I was a kid, I've never needed anybody to tell me what's going on in a song. I listen to songs that have murder in them or go to the movies and see the same thing. That doesn't mean I'm going to go out and do it too. I'm not Stryper, but I don't sing about killing people, either. This band does what it does and that's that. We don't care if people say it's right or wrong. We do it because we like doing it. That's all that counts for us."

TWISTED SISTER

DEE SNIDER: "I bailed out of the whole PMRC thing some time ago. My phones were tapped; my mail was checked; my packages were being sniffed by dogs; my name became mud. And nobody came out and backed me up. I stood up. Now let other people stand up. That's the way the government works. When they've got someone who they think is a potential threat, they try to get as much information on him as they can, to see if they can get anything to hold against him. You know your phone is being tapped when it doesn't hang up, or when you hear three people hang up at once or when you pick it up you can't get a dial tone. Washington was a frightening experience for me. Those people would have shot me if they could. They hated me because I made them look like fools. I never wrote songs about violence or sex, drugs and alcohol. But I got accused of doing all that and it's been accepted as fact by this point. I've gotten a bit bitter, actually. Kids have become so apathetic since the '60s. I just hope things aren't too far gone by the time people decide to wake up to the conservatism that's taking over our country."

Photo by Mark Weiss/MWA

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LIZZY BORDEN

LIZZY: "We censored ourselves more than they censored us. Our motive, more than anything else, had something to do with just getting bored with the old stuff. If I really wanted to continue doing what I've done in the past, I'd do it. I'm still writing sexually explicit lyrics, for example, but I'm just being a little more clever about it. In fact, I'm doing everything I used to do, but I'm just not being so blatant about it. I want to cover it all up a little bit, not make it so offensive, so a lot of people—girls especially—don't turn off on us without even giving us a chance. During my, uh, other period, ha, ha, ha. . . we cut ourselves off from too many females. It took a real strange lady to really like us. I can see a group like the Mentors being censored. They're pretty ridiculous. They've built their career completely on shock lyrics, the kind of words that if someone around you were using them, you wouldn't stay around that person!! I can understand that parents don't want their kids listening to all that—but, the problem is, if you try to censor them, where do you draw the line? I write songs about suicide, but if some kid killed himself listening to it, I don't know what I'd do. Sure, if you write some song that says directly: 'Go kill yourself!' . . . but, seriously, no one would listen to you anyway if you did that."

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MOTLEY CRUE

NIKKI SIXX: "We really thrive on the word 'sleazy.' Everybody does it. Everybody has groupies, gets drunk, does drugs. Everybody has wild sex. We're just very honest. We admit it. So naturally, we're the bad guys. We're the ones everybody is after. In the beginning especially, obviously we loved to shock. It's fun to shock. It's like Halloween. We said 'Let's find something to really blow away these square-ass people. Let's use a swastika. That'll really piss 'em off.' Then we thought about it a little and decided it wasn't really very funny or very fair. We kinda censored our own idea. I mean, that was a very hateful, harmful period in history and upset a lot of people who were victims. I mean, that wasn't our point anyway. We just wanted to pick something awful that would have the effect of saying: 'Watch this! Watch *us*!' So instead we picked the pentagram which has a tie-in with the occult. It was used in England in the early 1800s to ward off werewolves. We thought: 'OK, this will work.' But all of a sudden people started calling us devil worshippers and nobody wanted to know about us. They ran around writing a lot of bad press about us. I answered: 'Yeah, I believe in the devil. But I also believe in God.' No one seemed to hear that last part. They heard what they were trying to hear. In no sense at all does Motley Crue worship the devil. We just like to have fun. We really laugh at ourselves. They say we're evil and bad. Frankly, we just take what's going on in the world and hold it up to people like a mirror. We reflect it right back in their faces and they say: 'Oh my God! I can't believe it!!' We say: 'You can't believe it? It's *you*, sucker!' "

GUNS N' ROSES

SLASH: "I think that Tipper Gore and her colleagues should be dragged into some back alley somewhere in some slum and mercilessly gang-fucked by skinheads in bondage outfits. I think after that she'll just drop the subject. . . ha, ha, ha, ha. But really, I think her bullshit is actually a very healthy thing. For bands like us, street bands who are all about sex and drugs and violence and rebellion, when the kids who support us hear about censorship trying to hold us down, it just sells more records. It gives us more publicity and more support.

"Frankly, I don't know why the other bands are even complaining about it. I mean, if they could get away with actually censoring us, that would be different. Hell, we're the eternal teenagers, no matter how old we are. Basically we can say whatever we want because it's in the constitution. That upsets the Moral Majority no end. Also, we bother people because we talk about things that are fucked up in their own hometowns, things they would rather we kept quiet about. But there are a lot of people who relate to what we're saying because it's the truth. Why don't they go censor Stryper or Barry Manilow or Michael Jackson? Because those guys aren't saying things that really hit anything on the nose. It's just about vanity and stuff. It's nothing you can listen to and stand up for. If you could censor rock 'n' roll it wouldn't be rock 'n' roll. If everybody went along with it and rock was totally acceptable, then it wouldn't be rock. For our next album cover, I'm thinking of asking the other guys in the band if we can have the whole cover be one big warning label, nothing else, just a warning label. 'Buy at your own risk.' "

MEGADETH

DAVE MUSTAINE: "When I'm onstage, I tell the audience: 'Before I do the "Hook In Mouth" song, I want you to know it's about the PMRC'—and the crowd erupts! I tell them: 'It's aimed at one asshole in particular. She's fucking with our constitutional rights. She fucking with our freedom of speech.' I stick my dirty old finger up in the air and say: 'Fuck you, Tipper!' And that's about the long and the short of it. I think she has no right. . .! I mean, the next time she thinks she's perfect, let her try walking on water. I think the whole censorship and rock 'n' roll thing exists beause Tipper Gore thought she was going to be the First Lady of the country. See, she took acid when she was a kid and she's having severe flashbacks now and thinks she's God. I mean, I don't know if she just has over-sized shoulder blades or if she thinks those are wings, but she has no right to do stuff like that. It's not that rock 'n' roll kids like us aren't a part of the system, it's that we're not a part of *their* system. *Just because we've got long hair doesn't mean we've got shit for brains.* Most of the kids who like us have parents who were flower children. Today these parents plain don't care anymore. Their lives are set up. They figure: 'Fine, I made it. I'm going to be out of here pretty soon. I'm getting old.' Well, great. Hurry up and die so we can have the world back to ourselves! Maybe it's true that certain rock bands can influence kids in a negative way, especially if you are dealing with pseudo-stars, people who have an image they hang up at night. We try not to be really image conscious so that the kids who come to see us don't have to do really stupid things to act like us—like lighting their leg on fire and shit like that. All our fans have to do to be like us. . . is wake up! They definitely don't have to burn their skin off. We try to present ourselves in a responsible fashion. We're into healthy anarchy. When you're dealing with children, maybe censorship is fine. But when people come into the age of consent, when they know about sex, drugs, alcohol and cigarettes, then you might as well start telling them about the rest of it. Parents are dumping their personal responsibilities. That's why there are things like military schools, juvenile halls and foster homes. Rock doesn't need censorship. That's like putting gas on the fire. All those stickers are really telling kids is: '*You're going to like what's inside, but your mother's not*!' "

Photos by (left) Ross Marino; (bottom right) Chris Walter/Photofeatures Intl.

HURRICANE

JAY SCHELLEN: "Rock 'n' roll is all about rebellion. It's all about standing up for your own beliefs and I think it's an artist's responsibility to himself to do that. Sure, censorship tries to step in and tell you that you can't use your music as a vehicle to express ideas and they want you to change what you're saying. But if you do, then it's all worthless. It's not a matter of being shocking and outrageous in your presentation, like they try to imply. It's just that some subjects, like war, *are* shocking and outrageous all by themselves. To stand there and make light of it or try to dance around it, doesn't do anybody any good at all. Being true to life can in itself be shocking to people. So what? Countries play all kinds of power games and the general public knows very little about it. It's just not in their decks to deal with it. We're trying to deal with it and a lot of people don't like that."

POISON

BRET MICHAELS: "First of all, censorship kinda comes as a surprise to me because if you think about it, it's against everything the United States stands for. . . freedom of speech, freedom of the press, all that. For me, rock 'n' roll has always been something that has no limitations. You should be able to do what you want, express what you want how you want, and let the people decide whether it is right or wrong. Unfortunately, rock is a great thing to blame stuff on. You can blame anything on rock 'n' roll. I think they researched everything and found that the most general thing to blame stuff on is rock. For the Washington Wives, it's great. They can pick on something they know the average, middle-class, older citizen doesn't really relate to and gain a lot of popularity for their husbands in office. But if you look at a 'nice' hockey game or football game, there's guys in the field beating the hell out of each other for hours. Are they saying that rock 'n' roll is worse than that? But what really gets them is the spirit of rebellion in this music. Who would go to a rock concert if it was as mundane as whatever is going on next door? As far as being a bad influence on people, I've watched the news and thought the world was going to come to an end. I thought: 'That's it! I might as well kill myself.' I don't believe in censorship at all, but I'll tell you, I don't find anything wrong with a rating system—like they do for movies. It's fine to give people an idea of what they're going to hear on a record. Then the person buying the album can make the decision."

Photos by (left) Gene Ambo; (top right) Ross Halfin/Photofeatures Intl.

LAAZ ROCKIT

MICHAL COONS: "Censorship is so strange. There are times that you think you might or even *should* get censored and instead you're embraced. We were in England with Megadeth and a certain reviewer for a heavy metal magazine over there hates us and always writes bad things about us. We made up these T-shirts that said 'this reviewer. . . sucks dick' and all five of us wore them onstage during the show. Well, the magazine dug it so much they wrote glowing reviews of us! Just when we were expecting censorship. . . !! Weird! Now they love us. But I think rock 'n' roll is a great target for censorship because so many people are really hung up about sex, and there's a lot of sex in rock 'n' roll. For a lot of people, I think any graphic sexual or violent references only trigger some sort of fear inside them. Maybe they're afraid they might go out and act 'perverted' or violent. It's like the Pandora's Box theory. Don't open that thing! I don't want to know what's going on inside. Keep a lid on everything. But you know, this just gets the kids more interested. Kiss proved that years ago when they were accused of being 'Knights In Service Of Satan.' Gene Simmons said it best: 'Any bad press is good press because it just makes people think about you more.' "

LION

JERRY BEST: "Obviously rock's rebellious type of attitude is threatening to the establishment or the government. Stuff like Motley Crue's satanic imagery or Ozzy's old stuff, frankly, I think that's all a gimmick. I think any kid who takes that to heart and gets into worshipping the devil or something because he thinks he hears backward messages on an album, well, maybe he's already unstable. Some people don't have a clue about stuff and it's true that a lot of them are attracted to rock 'n' roll. That's why I think we need to display some sense of responsibility when we go out there in front of this type of kid. I feel Megadeth, coming out with the political messages that they do in their lyrics and even their interviews, certainly are doing their part to act responsibly. They're a band that knows what is going on. I share that feeling with them. We're not just guys with long hair and nothing else going for us."

W.A.S.P.

BLACKIE LAWLESS: "After all, I am one of the Senior Deans of Censorship!! After what I've gone through with the P.M.R.C., the truth is I have only recently begun to understand what this whole issue was truly about to begin with. It was about getting a man in the White House. When the whole Gary Hart thing first came down, when he got busted with Donna Rice, the guy who was his campaign manager was kind out of a job. Now this guy has a track record for backing winners, so after Hart fell out of the race, the Albert Gore people approached him to work on his campaign. He told them: 'Look, I'll consider working with you, but you've got to call your wife off! There's no way I'm going to get involved with you folks with her out there flapping her gums.' So they had a big conference here at Universal, where she said just about everything but 'please forgive me.' So, in a sense she had to actually censor herself—which is, I guess, what they call karma! But it just goes to show you what a giant scam the whole thing was. It was all for personal gain. I was in England last June, doing some interviews for our live album. I told this reporter what I felt was going on with the PMRC and he was a bit skeptical. The next day, he called me up, all freaked out, because he'd gotten some telephone number for the PMRC and actually called them up. The woman who answered the phone said: 'Gore For President Campaign. May I help you please?' I just laughed. That's when I knew my theory was absolutely correct. When it first started, I thought: 'What did I do to deserve this?' I thought this was going to be great for W.A.S.P. I thought they would make us so popular, we would be the next Beatles. The truth is, it didn't really hurt, but it didn't help either. It didn't do anything. Yeah, it made us a household word, but the kids already knew who we were, and the people who became aware of us who didn't know we existed—like grandparents—weren't going to buy our records anyway."

Photo by Mark Weiss/NWA

IRON MAIDEN

BRUCE DICKINSON: "Iron Maiden has never modified any lyrics or anything because there is a certain element of self-censorship that goes down with us. As far as we're concerned, there are many different ways to treat a subject. For example, my attitude about beating up women with two-by-fours is quite simple: It's not a very nice thing to do. I know that there are certain performers who make it part of their stage act to go on about how some chick gave them some lip and they beat the hell out of her with a piece of wood, but I think that's a pretty dumb way to go around influencing a load of kids. In heavy metal music, there's still a lot of macho content in the music. You see us all dressed up wearing cod pieces and whatever, and it can be a bit of fun. Of course, the danger comes when the people up there doing this actually start to believe that it's all true. I think people should be a bit more responsible about what they say and do on record and stage. I wouldn't dream of saying I'm some kind of macho man and I can keep it up all night. That's absolute rubbish and it's not what women are all about. But the way to defeat those kind of ideas is not through censorship. We should sit down with the guys writing this stuff and say: 'OK, let's talk about this and get into what you're really saying here. If you believe in this, well OK, but I want to tell you that I think your thinking really sucks.' That way it's an open forum. Keeping ideas down just because you don't agree with them is very dangerous. What exactly are they trying to censor today anyway? Most music on the charts today is the most boring, reactionary, 'let's prop up the system' music you can imagine. Let ideas come to the surface. We need them. Some you like. Some you don't like. What's important is that these ideas are heard. Right now, music is not offering people very many choices."

Photo by Ross Halfin/Photofeatures Intl

STRYPER

MICHAEL SWEET: "Well, I definitely think there are times and situations when censorship is a good thing in rock 'n' roll."

Stryper is one band that has never received much criticism or threats of censorship—except from evangelist Jimmy Swaggart. At the time of his attacks, your band was extremely shaken and upset. How do you feel about his attempts to censor you now that he himself has had to leave the pulpit for allegedly sinning with a prostitute?

MICHAEL: "We used to turn on TV and see him coming against rock 'n' roll, and we felt inside that it was really us he was speaking out against. In one of his services, he actually mentioned our name. For a while, we were really depressed, because he was the evangelist we were watching on TV when we actually gave our lives to Christ. It just kinda tore us apart. He was the man that brought us to the Lord, yet he was coming against us. We prayed and decided that we had to let that go. We couldn't come back and say: 'Well, he's a jerk. He has not the right and we don't like him.' We just said, 'Well, he has his views. We have ours, and we still love him.' And we do still love him, even after what he has supposedly done now, but of course it hurts. It's a shock. But I think it's a lesson for the whole world. Never put your trust in man. Put your trust in God. God is mightier than Jimmy Swaggart and even when he was attacking us, I knew and still know that God is using Stryper . . . even if we play rock music and look the way we do. God looks at your heart, not your outward appearance. And God created all kinds of music."

Photo by (left) Gene Kirkland

RONNIE JAMES DIO: "Well, I think censorship has affected all of us who are in this particular genre of music. For me, the difficult part is that I don't write that way. I never have been a writer who has praised any kind of evil. Most of the writing I've done has been very positive, about finding your dreams and goals in life. So to be lumped into the same category as the others has been very difficult to swallow. If you have to make adjustments for things you've never done, it seems even more stupid to me. We just don't do those kinds of things so why should we have to make those kinds of adjustments? But unconsciously, of course, you do. When you're included in the 10 most hated bands by the PMRC, you simply have to think about it. Rock 'n' roll is a young person's medium. Right from Elvis to today, rock has been looked upon as being the music of rebels. We're looked at as being unkempt, rebellious and stupid. There seems to be a great need to protect society from young people who like rock 'n' roll. But just as they've predicted the death of rock for thirty years now—and have been dead wrong about it—they're wrong about thinking kids are unkempt and stupid for liking rock. These kids are going to be the leaders of our country. There's no escaping rock 'n' roll. Also, there are a lot of troubled kids in this world who reach out to rock 'n' roll for a place to belong because they don't feel like they fit anywhere else. People are trying to take away the one thing they're holding on to. I've had kids come up to me after shows and say: 'I want to thank you for always giving me something to believe in. Without your music I would have remained a drug addict or killed myself. I would have been a bad kid.' When I see positive things like this coming from the music that is always being castigated, it absolutely makes no sense. Why are they trying to take away something that has a positive influence? What's left for them? I think the parents who are saying rock 'n' roll is the trouble with their kids are really trying to hide their own inadequacies. They're trying to cover up their own problems with raising kids. Hey, it all starts with the people who bring you up. It's up to parents to teach their kids the right values in life. Listen, when I was 15, I couldn't believe how stupid my parents were. When I was 21, I couldn't believe how much *they* had learned in six years!! It's true. But once you let censorship in the door, then you've taken away the rights of people who have died for these freedoms."

a Penelope Spheeris film

The Decline of Western Civilization Part II

the Metal Years

featuring **Alice Cooper • Ozzy Osbourne • Poison** and members of
Aerosmith • Kiss • Motorhead • W.A.S.P.

performances by **Megadeth • Faster Pussycat • Lizzy Bordon London • Seduce • Odin**

New Line Cinema presents an I.R.S. World Media production
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DEATH ANGEL

ROB CAVESTANY: "Well, one kind of censorship we've had to fight concerns our name, Death Angel. People are always saying that the name will hold us back, that it's too grim and not acceptable. Even when we signed with Enigma, they wanted us to change our name. But we just couldn't picture ourselves with another name. We like the contradiction—death and angels. It fits us. We're a contradiction. We have good and bad in us. That's not a bad thing. It's just something you have to face about yourself. It's just there. Why lie? It's real. We're not forcing ourselves or our music down anyone's throat. That's what's wrong with censorship. If people choose to listen to us, let them. It's no one else's concern. Some kids' parents may not want them listening to our music, but on the other hand, you just know they probably go out and buy them games with Rambo killing people and stuff. Promoting some American type war thing is really a much more violent way of getting people into killing. Our album is called *The Ultra Violence* and the cover has a picture of land that has been destroyed by nuclear bombs, laid flat. We're just saying to people: 'Look at yourselves! Look what can happen!' We're aware of what is going on in the world and want to reflect that back to people. Why censor *us*?"

VINNIE VINCENT: "In the '40s, they called Frank Sinatra's music 'the devil's music.' What we have grown up on, our parents don't feel safe with. I think it's because people are afraid of youth. I think it's because they are not young anymore. It's a 20 to 25 year cycle. People who were 20 are 40 now, and don't relate to a 20-year-old's music. At 40 you have responsibilities in your life, family, cars, houses, jobs, etc. Those days of fun, smoking pot, driving around with friends, going to the beach, picking up girls—those are all memories now. Maybe you don't want to hear about it all the time on the radio. I don't know. Also, I think it is very important to understand that it takes more to shock people today than it did 20 years ago. It takes more and more to get people stimulated today. If you look back, they couldn't show Elvis Presley from the waist down on *The Ed Sullivan Show*. That's hilarious now. The guy was wearing baggy pants back then. It wasn't as if he was wearing skintight pants where you could see his bulge. But times have changed. A lot of shocking things have happened in real life and we see it all on the news. Kids have a high threshold for shock. But I still think a young person's music is their life. It belongs to them. They don't want their parents to like their music. I think it's a matter of having something they can call their very own."

Photo by Mark Weiss/MWA

BRITMETAL

CELLULOID HERO

Anthrax's **Joey Belladonna** is making his movie debut any day now in a film that threatens to rival *Gone With The Wind* in outright classicdom: **The Hazing Of Hell**, which'll be shot in New Joisey. Joey plays a nice college kid, "an Indian hippy-type guy" who undergoes an initiation ceremony at his frat house. "They swore me in, blindfolded, and there's a tub filled with coffee grounds, baking soda, cornflakes, Sugar Smacks and hot water." Sounds like **Meat Loaf**'s breakfast! "No! It looked like blurrrgh, crap. And I've got to *sit* in it. But one of my buddies pours hydrochloric acid in there so I actually boil alive." For purely academic purposes we get to witness this. "There's some great make-up," he promised Britmetal. "With my eye bubbling up and stuff. And then I come back and kill them all," only he doesn't, some big bloke called Acid Sid gets the honor, and all Joey gets is the chance to stink of coffee grinds and Sugar Smacks for three days. Which he only deserves for listening to *Journey* on his walkman!

pheric with lights and one or two effects—making it theatrical without making it a joke. We're trying hard to come up with something good."

"Goode"? **Judas Priest** have just recorded a cover version of "Johnny B. Goode," something to do with an upcoming movie. Britmetal's off to Denmark to see them this weekend so we'll have the details next ish.

We hear that **Penelope Spheeris**, she of *The Decline Of Western Civilization* and *Suburbia* fame, is making a documentary about heavy metal called *The Decline Of Western Civilization: The Metal Years.* Doesn't quite have the same ring to it as *The Hazing Of Hell,* but it does have **Axl** of **Guns N' Roses** and **Alice Cooper** duetting on "Under My Wheels."

Fast Eddie Clarke has guaranteed his spot in this movieland concept column by employing a new singer—**Lea Hart**—who once worked on the *Revenge Of The Nerds* movie soundtrack! **Fastway**'s just released a new album. His onetime Fastway colleague, **Pete Way,** won't be releasing any more **Waysted** albums by the looks of things; he's put the band on hold to write songs with former **UFO** colleague, **Phil Mogg**.

Rob Armitage, the Northern Brit who was **Accept**'s new singer for five minutes a few weeks back, hasn't been in a movie but he *has* joined a Britband

by Sylvie Simmons

Hello? Still there? Earthquake didn't get you yet? **Megadeth** are still hiding out in England, just to be on the safe side, but we're sending you the totally superior **Iron Maiden** soon instead. And what's more, they'll be bringing their *concept album* with them! That's right, light your joss-sticks, iron your kaftans, the Concept Album is back. "With all your previous albums you can say, 'Well this is a bit better than that one' or 'That was a bit like that one'—they all refer back to one another. But *this* one," **Bruce Dickinson** told Britmetal, "although it's obviously Iron Maiden, it's quite distinctly different from anything we've done before. All the lyrics are tied together and the album is one story from beginning to end." And there might even be a *concept tour* to match! "We're not sure yet. One philosophy is to go for the Pantomime Castle bit where you've got turrets and six men in furry red tights and people go 'Ooh! That must be the Devil,' or go for something a bit more stylish and atmos-

named after one of the darned things: **Jagged Edge**.

Fish of **Marillion** has got nothing whatever to do with movies but since I've arbitrarily decided to change the concept from movies to *food,* thereby exercising the famed power of the press, he fits in fine. He's still trying to become a healthy skinny person by giving up beer, striking up an acquaintance with far less satisfying tea, and having a Turkish bath before he goes onstage every night. . . **Ted Nugent**, meanwhile, tells us he's going to open a restaurant in Los Angeles called Red Meat as a militant anti-veggie gesture.

Hold on, the veggies are fighting back! News just in that Britmetal regular **Lemmy** is homeless again after some French fries he was cooking in his apartment exploded into flames and burnt the place down! And the hamburger stand at **Zodiac Mindwarp**'s album-listening party caught fire last week too. The rock-writers just thought it was dry-ice and carried on drinking.

Hang on, who's that emerging from the smoke and flames? It's **Nikki Sixx**, with a quote in his hand. "We didn't make it to England because we were so burned out," he swears, "after a year on the road. We're not f---ed up on smack, we've seriously straightened out."

Yes, anyway, **Megadeth** have released their cover of the **Sex Pistols**' "Anarchy In The UK" with guest-star Pistol **Steve Jones** on it at the *very same time* as the *Never Mind The Bullocks* album went gold in the U.S.A. Punk lives, eh?

Phil Soussan has left **Ozzy Osbourne**'s band. His temporary replacement is **Bob Dailsey** of **Gary Moore**'s band, who's been doing some stuff with **Billy Idol**, and last time Britmetal looked he was threatening to audition for **Yngwie Malmsteen** and **Joe Lynn Turner**'s band.

Steve Howe, ex-**Asia**, has found true happiness with his old **Yes** colleague **Bill Bruford**. They've formed a band with **Bill Currie**, ex-**Uitravox**, they're releasing an album in the fall, and then they'll be touring the States, earthquakes permitting.

Robert Plant played a gig at the tiny Marquee in London with his new young band—a warm-up for his "Now And Zen" tour—and the place was packed to the rafters. Someone said **Jimmy Page** was there but Britmetal didn't see him, but I did see **Ian Gillan** and **Roger Glover** of **Purple**, **Roy Harper** (concept-album-lover) and **Sigue Sigue Sputnik** (not important). **Mike Rutherford** of **Genesis** and **Roger Waters**, ex-**Pink Floyd**, both looked decidedly unimpressed, and **Marc Almond**, who looked completely orgasmic. Plant included bits and pieces of old **Zeppelin** numbers in his set after swearing he wouldn't—"It's time to eat my words!"—and did a noble impersonation of his old "pal" **David Coverdale**.

Sad news is that the Marquee is due to close down before long. Its owner is selling the valuable sight in Soho, London, for office buildings. There's talk of another club with the same name opening elsewhere, but it just won't be the same. The Marquee without 24 years of spit beer and sweat on the floorboards is worse than Britmetal without a concept.

WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, WHY?

The Who got back together for the first time since Live Aid to play a set at the dire BPI awards (Britain's Grammys) in London. They're talking about doing another of their famous farewell tours in the States this summer. (**Who**'s appearance in Britmetal courtesy of **Roger Daltrey**'s appearance in the upcoming film about London gangster **Reggie Kray**.)

Photos by (top left) Ronald A. Murray; (bottom left) Ross Halfin/Photofeatures Intl.; (top right) R.J. Capak/London Features; (bottom right) David Wainwright/Photofeatures Intl.

RECORDS

AC/DC
Blow Up Your Video
(Atlantic)

I was gently polishing my flame-colored false eye with the "Megadeth Is Luv" insignia on the pupil and having daymare visions of bizarre telethons for Jimmy Swaggart Rehab Centers 'n' Love Bodegas when this music wafted out of my G-blaster and drove itself into the center of my skull, which is not exactly the easiest thing to do these days.

No, it wasn't the soundtrack from the local Mellow-pelegiacs' Anonymous Dance Party 'n' Tupperware Swap. No it wasn't escaping teenage steam. No it wasn't even the captured sounds of the gods farting—it was in fact the latest sonic outing from AC/DC, those psycho-'Roos of the outback and thudaholics supreme, *Blow Up Your Video.*

Drunk without proof; dull without a cause, I yawned, yawed, yawped and yowled and ritualistically enacted the secret subliminal command of the title. These blues-damaged reverends of metal-ingus screaming out from the rusted roots of days gone by were a breath of fresh air from the current spate of amphetanoise-caked teen khans masking insecurities with wave upon wave of sheer bellicosity disguised as velocity. Not to mention a pleasurable break from the top pop metal bands who all have finally managed to sound like Sammy Davis's theme from *Baretta.*

Taking a swig outta my dusty Romilar bottle and swift lick from my valium-on-a-rope, I let the boys from the boondocks do their stuff.

"Heatseeker" comes on like a stick of lit dynamite being shoved up your butt. I just saw that happen in a movie and it immediately reminded me of this song. Y'know—loud rhythmic noise and fireworks combined with maniacal laffter.

"That's The Way I Wanna Rock 'N' Roll" is pure sonic paganism in the tradition of "For Those About To Rock"—anthemic, rude, and slightly frenzied in scope and vision. Best cut on the whole damn LP if ya ask me.

"Meanstreak," "Kissin' Dynamite," and "Some Sin For Nuthin' " are textbook AC/DC and hit a groove full of rhythm snakes and heady with the wine of noise stomped out mightily by Angus Young's guitar and attitude.

While "That's The Way I Wanna Rock 'N' Roll" contains the lyrical sentiments of the LP title and is damn near as good as AC/DC gets, "This Means War" fractiously announces to those of us out there in the suburbs of the teenage wasteland that *this* is what rock 'n' roll means. Not since I first heard Zep's "Dazed And Confused" has a song like this really soothed my cauliflowered soul. I LIKE IT!

As a matter of fact, this whole album, simply stated, is *great!* I can say no more. Buy it. Become one with it. Strap your older brother to a chair and force it through his Whitesnake-o.d.'d heart. Throw it at people from moving cars. Use it for an ashtray. Make love to it. Make love on it. Possess it before it possesses you, me, the entire city of Toledo. . .

Joe Fernbacher

TED NUGENT
If You Can't Lick 'Em . . . Lick 'Em
(Atlantic)

I'd been anticipatin' the new Ted Nugent LP for some time, so much so that a number of nights ago I dreamt I was watchin' the TV when a stray transmission from Ann Arbor imposed Ted on my screen. He was seated behind a table piled high with plates of mutton and venison sausage just like on the back of his old *Call Of The Wild* LP. Then ole Ted smiled and offered me some of the sausage. That was enough to wake me up because I've never been a real fan of venison, astral or otherwise.

With all that in mind, I took it as a good omen when the album arrived and on its back cover, right out in the open for all to see, was a hunk of venison sausage. Ted was smilin' once again and I thought to myself that maybe there was some truth to the hype circulatin' through the grapevine that this disc would be a stylistic return to the Nuge's '70s salad days. Word had it that Tom Werman had returned to produce and recapture some of the deviltry that made "Cat Scratch Fever" such a classic.

The record began to play and I became angry. "Can't Live With 'Em" and "She Drives Me Crazy" were *not* good—just average hard rock songs with unremarkable riffs, predictable lyrics, and little trace of the old Nuge. They sounded just like outtakes from *Little Miss Dangerous.*

"Duped again!" I grimaced just as the title track began to play. Mid-tempo raunch screamed outta the speakers as feedback elephants trumpeted and whisked me away to some ancient land where the Great White Buffalo lurked in the distance. Ted was mumbling some inanities about lickin' female fans and I felt ashamed for not having given him the chance to show his true mettle before I exploded.

The next two songs were similarly fine. Ted was singin' (on "Skintight") about something he was a real expert on—women with large tight buttocks and slim physiques. His guitar was painting a lurid picture and it made my head swim. "Funlover" was even better. Its poontang sneer woulda made Billy Gibbons smile.

The second side started off with a smokey ballad which conjured up some "Little Wing" Hendrixisms before diving head first back into the dirt with "The Harder They Come (The Harder I Get)" and the anthemic "Separate The Men From The Boys (Puh-leeze)." I was beginning to wonder if Ted had been vacationing in a shack somewhere outside La Grange. If he had, he should go back often because the experience (or whatever it was) had resulted in a record one helluva step up from the Nuge of (recent) albums past.

I guess that what I'm trying to say is that this album is chock full of unadulterated Ted. This time out there is no pop production, no wheezing keyboards (although the credits say so, I really couldn't hear 'em), and no bleating wimps to get in the way of the full-throttle guitar wranglings and "I HUNT WHITE *TAIL* YEAR ROUND!" philosophy. Way to go man!

—George "Metal" Smith

AQUARIAN DRUMHEADS
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THE READERS REVIEWS

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LITA FORD
Lita
(RCA)

The Second Coming of Christ, Blackie's codpiece operating without malfunctions and a new album from Lita Ford. How long must we wait for these momentous events to happen?

Well, the wait is over—at least for the latter. Yes, after four years of incessant anticipation, Lita's (self-titled) album is finally available in your local record store.

Being the avid and loyal fan that I am of the peroxide princess of metal, I snatched the album up even before it could settle into the record store shelves. I held onto it like it was the universe's most precious gem. Until I got it onto my stereo—there, I placed it on the turntable and waited to hear the hard and heavy music I had so anxiously waited years for.

The music began and my face fell faster than an anvil pushed over a two-foot ledge. Did I, by some inexplicable error, pick up a Whitney Houston LP instead of Lita's? No, I found after quickly grabbing the cover, this was indeed the new Lita Ford album.

"Back To The Cave" was unlike anything Lita'd ever attempted before. Not to say that musicians have to perform the same monotonous music eternally, but *Lita* gone commercial? I didn't even want to think about it. OK, I reassured myself, maybe the rest of the album would be better.

And boy, was I happy to hear the riveting, screeching guitars of "Can't Catch Me." Now *that's* the Lita I remember! "Blueberry," up next, starts off promising with a really heavy beat, but goes downhill like the first song. Besides which, the lyrics are more than a tad hokey. Same goes for "Kiss Me Deadly," but I assure myself that both of these songs'll grow on me.

There are contributions here from many of metal's elite—Nikki Sixx, Ozzy Osbourne and Lemmy, to name a few. Lita's duet with the Oz on "Close My Eyes Forever" is one of the LP's highlights, as is the (co-written by Sixx) rocker "Falling In And Out Of Love." But, sadly, the high points are few on *Lita*. It seems like Lita Ford will do anything, including compromise her musical style, to have a multi-platinum album. And she's fooling herself about it; just look at the message on the cover where Lita tells her fans to always "Follow your hearts." She's certainly not following her own advice.

Lita is not a fun album. I want fun albums. This is just insipid. Am I still a Lita Ford fan, though? You bet—I'll just wait for her to come to her senses. Until then, there's still "Dancin' On The Edge."

Michelle R. Martinez
Watertown, MA

CARNIVORE
Retaliation
(Roadracer)

Aieee!

That was my first reaction upon listening to this new slab of nitroglycerine-laced vinyl by the Brookly-based band Carnivore. This is thrash for thrashers—brutal, angry, nasty music by three guys I don't ever want to meet. They sound pissed and I think I'd rather not get too

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close to a guy who looks like he could casually shred PMRC members with one hand while the other was wrapped around a cold brew.

Who are these menaces? I don't actually know since none of them has a last name. We've got Marc on guitar and vocals, Louie (or is that John Belushi back from the dead?) on drums and vocals and Peter rounding out the trio on bass, lead vocals and looking very big.

So they look mean. Well, they sound mean too. I don't consider myself a thrash expert since to me a lot of the bands around now sound too much alike and if you stop to actually listen to them it's kind of scary. I *do* listen to them though, from Anthrax to Zoetrope, and I can't think of a band that Carnivore sound like. Very heavy, yes. Fast? Of course. But they frequently slide into a kinda castor oil grunge. The most noticeable thing about this band is a sick sense of humor and lead vocals that are a pissed off cross between Lemmy and Tom Warrior.

But what about the tunes on this, their second effort? Well, you have to pay attention to pick out the separate songs since the breaks between songs are just about non-existent.

The first song on side one isn't exactly what I'd call a "song," unless the sound of someone getting copiously and violently sick is music to your ears. Yes indeed, the actual sounds of someone vomiting make up the entire "tune" "Jack Daniels And Pizza." Listen to this after a heavy night of drinking, I dare you.

Just about the time you're beginning to feel nauseous (hangover or not), sweet relief explodes out of your speakers in the form of "Angry Neurotic Catholics." Hundreds of Catholics swarm over you and your dog, and boy are they pissed. Fast and crunchy, slow and nasty, this is not the song to play at a Catholic high school dance.

Before your trust in the church is destroyed totally, and actually before you've figured out just what the hell is going on, "S.M.D." crawls all over you like a fungus. And S.M.D. does not mean "Sonic Masters Of Destruction." It's more along the lines of a, er, sexually explicit suggestion for anyone who doesn't like the band or thrashers or skins or anyone like most of us, in general. Kind of like a nice little train ride to Hell killing everything along the way.

"Ground Zero Brooklyn" follows, the latest anti-nuke-my-neighborhood thrash song. I kind of like this one though, even though I'm kind of worried about these guys.

A little more sludge-locomotive-sludge and things snarl down into "Race War." This song will *never* see airplay. *Ever.* If this song isn't sarcastic or sung with a twisted sense of humor, these *are* some very scary people. Kind of interesting commentary on prejudice though.

"Inner Conflict" wrenches itself loose from your speakers next and, hey, if they played this any other way it would probably spawn a couple hundred suicides. It's dangerously close to being a Marillion tune but it's vicious enough musically to leave you feeling slightly schizoid.

"Jesus Hitler" opens side two, and if "Angry . . ." didn't get you excommunicated, this one will do it. If there is a God, better hope you don't die listening to this and then have to explain what you were doing. I like it though. In fact it's my favorite tune on this vinyl toxicity. Spending more time on the slow crunch than on the locomotive express (compared to the rest), it's an interesting ditty. "J.H." melts into "Technophobia," a self-explanatory title and to me the least memorable song of the album. What's this? Oh my God, a cover of Hendrix's "Manic Depression"! And it's even pretty good—unless you're a Hendrix fanatic in which case no cover will ever do it justice. But I like it, so shut up.

And what the hell is this? An instrumental? Of course, it is entitled "Five Billion Dead." Figure it out. A raw sounding bit of music, it is, surprisingly, sedately paced and not at all disturbing to listen to. It's kind of like a valium after 30 cups of coffee. It just feels *good.*

Until the last and nastiest outburst of all mangles your neurons, "Sex And Violence." This song gives me the impression that Carnivore is trying for lifetime membership on the PMRC's hit list. It's enough to kill your poor old grandma with the weak heart.

I like this. Metalcore for urban guerillas as the ad says. If you like your thrash mixed with grunge, with an edge and more than a little anger, buy this album today. Or *steal* it. Whatever. Get it. You won't be sorry. And if you're a limp-wristed poof, get the hell out of here. 'Cos this is music for people by people who just don't give a shit what you think. And that's the way it should be.

Brian F. O'Neil
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THE VINNIE VINCENT INVASION
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(Chrysalis)

According to the ol' Vinster—who reportedly abused his famed day-glo Flying V in unspeakable ways prior to torching the sucker in heartfelt sacrifice—*pink is bunk!* No more sissy rock for this former sissy, sez he, and he backs it up with some meaty evidence in the form of this hunky 11-track (12 on cassette, 14 on CD and, presumably, 52 on DAT) disc. It's the Vinnie Vincent Invasion's third so far (I think), and it's a *loud* S.O.B. Rumor has it that mighty-mouth Mark Slaughter shattered a baker's dozen of microphones while recording these chestnuts, and I believe it. . . mainly because I can't be bothered to check up on it, but also 'cause VVI drummer/Rambo rocker/Golden Gloves champ (can't swear to that one either, folks)/avid amateur ichthyologist (ditto) Bobby Rock might take said inquiry personally and use my face for punting practice even though football's out of season and he prefers chess (ditto again).

With that in mind, I tend to side with Mr. Rock's two fave cuts, "Naughty Naughty" and "I Want Dirty Rhythm" (figures), even though there're too many electro-squiggles on the latter for my taste, though I understand it's Vinnie's homage to the wild man of the violin, Itzhak Perlman (still checking). Actually, "Ashes To Ashes" is more my speed, it being a sort of "Immigrant Song Pt. II" despite the decidedly un-Zeppish techno-wizardry that starts off the tune. Backwards masking is go!

Then there's the scorching "Burn" which *really* tickles my fancy, what with Vinnie revving his engines like in *Death Race 5000* (or *2000*, or something) just before David Carradine runs over a nanny with a baby carriage for 250 points (we've really *got* to hire a facts checker). And for you patriotic statistic hounds, there's Vinnie's humbling CD/cassette/laser-flexi-disc-only version of "The Star Spangled Banner" (which used to be our national anthem before "The Ballad Of Gary Hart") with 100 (count 'em) guitar parts stacked on top of each other. It's as good a reason to dust off those Koss headphones as any, dub fans.

One thing I know for *certain* (or at least until I'm told otherwise) is that bassist Dana Strum of Ozzy Osbourne and Braggarts Anonymous fame produced this baby and did a *hell* of a great job on it despite his tendency to take long lunches at Le Dome (Le Taco Bell?) while the other three boyos sweated it up to make this soundtrack for your next heart attack. The Invasion—which is what this here piece of paper marked "For Immediate Release" says is how they prefer to be known nowadays—has produced such a smoldering piece of poly-vinyl that, well, I'm honored and proud as punch that they've offered to include me in their next press junket to Tokyo (*That's Tucson. —Ed.*). Did I mention that Mark actually has an uncle named *Butch Slaughter*? (Verified.)

Vicki Arkoff

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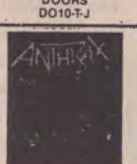

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record has clean production (courtesy of one Dave Mustaine), although there's a good amount of bass tone and plenty of beef in the *loud* guitars. There's a thudding power here that hits home best on the album's opener, "Battle Angels."

What hurts are Warrel Dane's vocals, which plod through well-worn air raid siren territory and get a little too histrionic for me. The man's got a strong set of lungs, no doubt, but he's gotta regulate the audio frequency at which the air is emitted from said lungs.

I guess these guys come closest to Savatage in terms of contemporaries, although for influences, they look back to early Sabbath and Priest. There's lots of doom and screaming here, but in the end, the only really memorable song is the cover of "White Rabbit." If the songs develop, these guys have a future.

As for Znowhite, they work thrash material that could be equally familiar as the stuff that Sanctuary is doing, but Znowhite stand out because guitarist Ian Tafoya not only delivers mean, crispy-crunchy riffs with lotsa sharp edges, but he also incorporates some catchy melodies into the hyper-thrash and knows how to write a memorable chorus. Znowhite have been around for years, having released three self-financed records before this one, but only now have they had the backing to do it right.

Complementing Tafoya's slashing guitar pyrotechnics are the gutsy vocals of Nicole Lee, that rarest of rarities, a female singer in a heavy band who can sing with power and not detract from the mean music. She lacks range, but makes up for it in determination, and although she has since left the band, her successor Debbie Gunn (formerly of Sentinel Beast) is cut from the same cloth.

Picks: "To The Last Breath," with its explosive rhythm and epic chorus; "Thunderdome," Mad Max insanity and blood-crazed chants backed by pounding chords; "Rest In Peace," another catchy chorus, a crushing first verse, and high-speed lead calisthenics; and "Something Wicked (This Way Comes)," slow, scary doom riffs punctuated by interesting phrases, and of course, a do-or-die finish.

The bottom line is that Znowhite are a classy thrash metal act who are ready for recognition and deserve it, while Sanctuary need more time. If you can afford both, fine. If not, go with Znowhite. I guarantee they sound nothing alike.

Don Kaye

Photos by (left) Paul Natkin; (right) Mark Weiss/MWA

THE SCORPIONS:
MONSTERS WHO *WON'T DIE!*

by Hank Bordowitz

Klaus Meine is in a playful mood.

"For METAL," he laughs, "we decided to do this interview in German, because we thought you guys were very smart. What do you think?"

Well, I think that my German is several steps worse'n my English, the language I abuse so well. I tell him so.

"OK," he says. "You speak English, we'll speak German."

The subject, of course, is the Scorpions' new album, *Savage Amusement*, which should be out as you read this. But you never know. It was also supposed to be out this time last year.

"That was the last one," he retorts quickly, still in English. "In the end, something different comes out. In between tours we worked on pre-production on the album, then we started in the studio, then we went back to write some more songs. That kind of stuff.

"I'll tell you the truth," he finally concedes. "After the last tour, which went on for 13 to 14 months all over the world, after Rock In Rio and Japan in 1985, we said that we didn't want to go back to the studio, and boom, back on tour again. It cuts down on your power. We're not in the heavy metal Olympics. We love touring and going on the road, but it's stupid to make a cheap album, a poor album just because you can sell out all the big venues in America. Making a fast album, it's like junk food. We said, for the first time in our career, 'OK, guys, this time, we take some time.' "

"When we said we would release an album last March," Rudolph Schenker finally gets a word in edgewise, "we thought we would be finished last March. Then we found out that we didn't want to hurry so much. We wanted to do some new songs and to do some experiments, to find a better sound and give the whole album a touch of magic. To make it three or five times better than *Love At First Sting*. That's the point. We don't want to go in the circle, each year an album, each year a tour, because then you're not interesting enough to the people."

It seems to be the nature of their relationship that Klaus does most of the talking (though Rudy did manage to get his say). Rudy, in fact, comes off as almost taciturn in comparison, and certainly soft-spoken. This is surprising since Rudy Schenker never seems to have a picture taken with his mouth closed!

"The problem is that when people are taking pictures, they take 20 or 30 pictures and I stay normal," Rudy says. "Then they say, 'Action, action!' And then I do only one or two pictures with my mouth open, and this is the one they sell. It's the photographers. It's just bad luck. I ask the photographers, 'Where are the other pictures where I look *normal*?' I always see these pictures in the magazines. Now I know why people don't re-

cognize me. They always see me with my mouth open in pictures in newspapers."

Love At First Sting, the last studio release by the Scorpions, came out over four years ago, for those of you without a calendar. Now, time was in rock that if you were gone for four years, you were *gone*. The Scorpions managed to keep visible, though. They put out a double live album, *World-Wide Live*, and a film/video to go along with it. This capped a tour that truly took them worldwide, from America to Brazil to Japan and even behind the Iron Curtain to Budapest.

"It was a great tour, a successful tour," Klaus beams. "We had a feeling it was about time to put it on film and put everything together, boom. So we did the live album, worked on the documentary."

No one was quite prepared for the success of *World-Wide Live*. Through some very clever promotions like sending the tape on a tour of clubs and colleges, tied in with radio stations across the country, the album went platinum—an unusual metal for a double-live metal album. But no promotion can be entirely successful without a bedrock of fans out there, and the Scorps definitely have that. It's something they've earned, something they're entitled to (like the vacation) after playing together for nearly 20 years.

"In the Scorpions, we've been together since 1970," Rudy marvels.

"We met the first time in 1968," Klaus adds.

"Klaus was singing in a band called Mushrooms," Rudy recalls.

"Next year we can have a party," Klaus muses, then starts singing: "It was 20 years ago today."

"We'll have tequila slammers," Rudy suggests.

Of course, this sort of longevity has its drawbacks. When the Scorpions hit the road again this spring in the Monsters Of Rock Fest, they will have been playing for more years than many of their fans have been alive. While many people getting into their 30s are concerned about getting older, the Scorps have to be equally concerned that they can still reach these younger fans. Yet, it really doesn't seem to bother Meine or Schenker.

"No, not at all," Klaus says emphatically. "But I think when you have a problem as musicians playing onstage to a bunch of 15-year-old kids, then you're too old to rock 'n' roll."

"I don't think it's important when people are born," Rudy adds. "It's important that people like the music. That's the most important point. Three days ago, I saw a six-month-old baby listening to our music. He was smiling. He wasn't there a year ago, but he already likes Scorpions music. That's good.

"My sister told me," he continues, "that one day in the South of France she saw this old man, maybe 68 or 70 years old, go to the jukebox, put some coins in and he dialed up 'Still Loving You.' The best way is to make music to reach all the people. When you have the taste to give feelings to many people that's fantastic. We don't think we have to make music for people between 20 and 30, or between 15 and 25.

"Twenty years ago, nobody could imagine somebody in rock 'n' roll older than 30. If you look at it that way, I must be dead for five years," Rudy laughs. "Or maybe six. But who cares? I have a feeling that when you're still hungry, that's the main point. To be hungry for this kind of music. When you're tired of going out on the road, when you're tired of going on an airplane and traveling around the world, when you're tired of going up on

***"Where are the pictures where I look* normal?"**

—Rudy Schenker

Photos by Mark Weiss/MWA

a big stage and playing in front of 20,000 people, when you're tired of all this, and when you turn the radio off when you hear your songs because they are just not good enough and not young enough, then it's probably better to stay at home and do whatever you want to do. I think, when I listen to the new album, when I hear the tracks, I don't get the feeling that this is a bunch of guys who've been playing music for 20 years. It sounds pretty fresh and we kick some young bands' asses!"

You probably know more about this than we do. As we speak, nothing except a vague release date in April is set. The album's recorded, but it's still being mixed. As due date for the copy approaches, the peons and the press can't hear it, so we have to take the word of these two Germans that it's great. Would *you* buy new music from these men?

"What we like about this album is we arranged to have a mixing engineer, Mike Shipley," Rudy divulges. "Before, we always mixed by ourselves. This time, a brand new person comes in, fresh ears, and he's doing some things that we would not normally do because we're too close.

"When you're by yourself, you try to put this guitar a little louder, this thing a little louder and you lose the feeling of the whole thing. What he's doing, he doesn't think about how this guitar must be louder; he's mixing for the whole feel, that the whole song gets the right feel. That's what you're sometimes losing when you mix by yourself. You give some things more room, but with a fresh ear, you put one thing a little bit in the back and something else more up front."

"It's like when five people compose a song, and everyone comes up with some little pieces," Klaus comments. "It's much stronger when one or two people are working on one thing."

While *Savage Amusement* mines new sonic territory, if you're gonna believe the band, as always, the artwork is a major bone of contention. This is the band who have had to put nearly a cover per country on their releases because someone always takes offense at what's on the jacket—even *before* they can be offended by what's in the grooves.

"Our problem," Klaus snickers gleefully, "is we always come up with some dirty cover ideas, and then somebody comes and says, 'No, you can't do that because we're running into trouble in America.' That's another reason we take so long. It would be easy to put out an average cover, but we don't want to do that, because we are really cover freaks. I mean, nowadays, when you have CDs and cassettes selling in America, cover art doesn't matter anyway. I think that's really too bad. We try to come up with something really outrageous. That's difficult to find. If you go about it in a very aggressive way, the fans who like 'Rock You Like A Hurricane' will love it, but the fans who like 'Still Loving You' will go 'Wow, how disgusting.' Then when we find something and we go, 'Wow, that's exactly what we want to say with our music,' some guy in America will say, 'No, you can't do that. It's too offensive.' That's what we're famous for."

> ***"We kick some young bands' asses!"***
>
> ***—Rudy Schenker***

"Not our music!" jibes Rudy.

Klaus shoots back: "Now we'll try to become famous for our music as well." ▣

VAN HALEN

METALLICA
METAL
Mark Weiss/MWA

DOKKEN: NO PARTY ANIMAL

by Elianne Halbersberg

A strange tool, the First Amendment. Media fight in its defense, then exploit its privileges—making martyrs of the deceitful, glorifying the guilty on tabloid covers, destroying creative passions through fabrication of turmoil and egotistical indifference. Should your assumption be based on what inquiring minds want you to know, your impression of Don Dokken is probably that of an arrogant, humorless, intolerant, self-serving jerk. Spend an hour and a half conversing with the man behind the band, and what you'll find is a quick-witted individual who willingly shifts an album/tour interview into an all-encompassing spectrum: Khaddafy, homelessness, starvation, promiscuity . . . A rebel with many causes, refusing to compromise his convictions.

Concern and perception are integral in Dokken's songwriting. Add the sterling musicianship of George Lynch, Jeff Pilson and Mick Brown, and *Back For The Attack* should convince any skeptic that Dokken, collectively, are destined for longevity and respect. Is this a better record? Their best record? Does it matter?

"No, it doesn't," the singer defends. "That question is best asked of our fans. We took eight months to get the songs up to par. Obviously, each record brings more pressure; the second should be better than the first, the third should be better than those two put together. But it depends on the scale. We can only compare it to ourselves, nothing else. It stands up as far as good, solid material. I wish there was a ballad. I wrote one of the best ever but it got voted out. What's important is that we fought the trends. Today, every sixth record sounds like what's been most successful. We stay away from that. A lot of bands don't and it's foolish. You're supposed to sound like yourself."

But Dokken realizes it might take an impartial observer to get that sound—he stresses the improbability of self-production. Neil Kernon undertook *Back For The Attack* after a democratic vote ousted Don's original candidate, Michael Wagener. "Neil has a good ear as far as pitch goes," he concedes. "Neat, careful and picky. He makes me do things 400 times until it's perfect—maximum tone and pitch. I question that—the risk of losing the feeling. I thought sometimes I would sing a couple of notes that weren't perfectly in tune but the attitude was there. Neil preferred perfection. It was technology versus emotion. I'd rather someone just push the button and let me sing."

Those rare moments Don's not sequestered in studio or on tour are spent "In seclusion. I disappear completely. I stay away from rock parties, functions of 'Rock This' or 'Rock That.' I do benefits, like that Find The Children show at the Forum, but I sing and leave. I don't hang out afterwards when everyone tells each other how wonderful they are," he smirks. "All that really means is, 'You shit, you sell more records than we do.' I used to only care what my peers thought. Now, I only care what our fans think, because they buy the records, believe in you, know where you come from. Your musical peers are only concerned with who's higher on the charts. I'm not into that."

He *is* into playing live though. Dokken credits touring as the incentive that unifies the band. So this summer, while holding down a slot on the Monsters Of Rock extravaganza, the band should be unified, if nothing else. Though he disdains the insecure feeling of packing and unpacking, waking up in a different city everyday, Don thrives on performance, insisting, "You've got to give 100 percent. If you're on tour for yourself or to make money, if you don't love the audience and the music, it's the beginning of the end." It's an approach, he thinks, that puts Dok-

Photo by Mark Weiss/MVA

ken in the musical minority.

"A lot of bands have a set rap. With us, it's a surprise for the other three every night," he grins. "Each audience is different. They lead me on to say what comes. Sometimes I get in a space, talk, but usually I try to feel out the audience and see where they're coming from. Some nights I'm aggressive in a shy way, or moody. I hang on the microphone stand all night, wearing my sunglasses, off in my own world. I get so intense, to sing as well as possible. There's no time to think what about; just to put the right emotion on key words; passion, aggression."

So what makes him such a good frontman?

"I don't think I *am* a good frontman," he admits, soft-spoken and modest. "Compared to David Lee Roth, who is considered the ultimate, Mr. Extravaganza. I'm a singer; a guitar player turned singer. Some people like the way I am on stage, but some think it's boring. I don't fly on a guidewire or do backflips."

Neither do Robert Plant and Ian Gillan,

two of the best, it is observed. He brightens. "I'm so glad we're on the same wavelength. Some people want to see show-biz, others just want to see someone sing their best. I'm not interested in becoming a ringleader-type performer. I want to make the vocals as close to or better than the record, project my personality, so people get a glimpse of what I'm about."

A further glimpse can be had by looking back to the formative years of the Dokken record collection—stuff like Cream, then Hendrix. "They blew my mind. I liked the distorted guitars. Until then, I had only heard the Beatles' guitars." Proving Don's a man of taste, his fantasy group to join was Blue Cheer. "They were totally outrageous and the first heavy metal band." First concert: "Sky Saxon with the Seeds. I was eight or nine and vaguely remember it."

After a few years spent losing precious hearing range to Iron Butterfly, David Bowie, Steppenwolf and Canned Heat, he developed a career goal. "I always felt this is what I would do. My father, a musician, told me, 'There's a one in a million chance you'll make it.' I said, 'That one chance excites me.' I was discouraged at times, but after the first album, I realized I could keep plugging away at it."

He began as a lead guitarist, and started singing "by default because our vocalist didn't show up one night." Some years later, he was to make his recorded debut as a solo artist. "Then George and Mick stayed and we changed it to Dokken, the group. I always felt it was better to go see a band than a person with a back-up group. That's why we try to keep this team. If the day comes when it stops being one and it looks like it's going to hurt the musical direction, that's it.

"I don't feel secure, because this is an insecure business. You're famous on Monday, then it's 'Who?' on Tuesday. I think we're *getting* successful. We're paying the rent, and we're proud to have platinum records, that a million people think we're good enough to own our album. But I don't feel like a *rock star*. I feel like I always did. *Rock star*—I think of Michael Jackson. I just see myself as a musician. I'm not a total crazed perfectionist. I just want to be happy. There's no grand-scale scheme of things. The color of the album cover doesn't have to be 'the perfect shade of blue' and such. I just want to make the record, put it out, and go for it. I'm easy . . . until I'm crossed. Then I can be difficult in a big way!"

And when difficulty rears its head, Don's pretty likely to just disappear. Not to some island paradise, either. Don's more likely to just slide under an old 'Vette. "Restoring cars balances my time," he says. "I buy them beaten to hell and fix them. It's like watching a child grow up, changing, getting better. I love cars. Working on engines requires concentration. I take my thoughts to another place. Three or four hours a day, like stress release. Some people golf, bowl, drink. I fix cars."

OK, so he's good with his hands *and* his voice—but what does Don Dokken think his weak points are? "I've got tons of them" he offers without hesitation. "Too sensitive to criticism, romantic, get angry easily about the state of the world, the stupidity of fighting about 'My religion, my land, I want this.' The planet belongs to everybody, but this world is very greedy. It's really too bad. Some people think my strengths *are* my weaknesses—being sensitive to life. Insensitivity means you've become numb. People who think that's a strength don't see the whole picture. It's Catch-22. The philosophy that talking about it shows more weakness. The person who speaks

doesn't know, and the person who knows doesn't speak."

The most difficult point in his career was, he claims, "Putting the guitar down and not being able to play live anymore. I felt very strange the first time I sang without it. Millions of people could tell in the early days. They said I looked insecure, uncomfortable. I didn't know what to do during George's solo. It was the worst!"

While he has accepted if not totally adjusted to the change, there are still other barriers to scale. Dokken is no stranger to misconceptions created by power of the press. Misconceptions like "George being the heavy side of the band and I'm the soft side. I've contributed to all the albums as far as writing. 'Kiss Of Death'—lyrics and melody are mine. I'm not pop, George isn't all metal. When I formed the group, before the present members, we were metal. George, Mick and Jeff swung over from a lighter side. Everyone assumes the guitarist is always the metal element and the clear voice is a melodic, smooth guy. I write heavy songs, but I don't have a raspy voice when I sing."

Don's on a roll now, and the rebuttals just keep comin'.

"That George and I hate each other. We're not best friends, we see things differently in life, but it's like sibling rivalry." According to both men, too much has been made of what they consider healthy creative tension. So deep are the cuts that one wonders how they harbor their bitterness and endure interviews with such patience and charm.

"I told the record company on this tour that I didn't want to talk to anyone because the press takes too many creative liberties," Dokken states. "They want to find dirt. I don't understand it. I just want to make music. The fans—why is there always someone who has to pop their bubbles? Our fans don't care about who I sleep with, my sex life, the fist-fights I get into in some bar. There are people in this business who have no conscience. How do they sleep?"

He is surprised at the suggestion that this kind of aggressive straightforwardness intimidates fans, and at first, even the occasional interviewer. "Why? My reputation? I am distant to everybody. They tell me that...there's an aloof side," he muses. "I don't know why it developed over the years, the persona of a loner. I shy away from interviews. I'm not interested in telling people what they want to hear—the consummate, obligatory answers: 'Oh, yeah, we're having a great time, we party every night,' the road stories. I hope I'm not intimidating onstage! I'm there to enjoy the audience and for them to enjoy me. I'm a bit moody, hard to figure out. I don't smile a lot.

"I see grumpy pictures of me, very intense. Everyone says I don't smile enough. Even as a kid, they'd say, 'What's wrong?' 'I'm just thinking! Minding my own business! You just interrupted as I was flying a spaceship to Mars! Do you mind? Leave me alone!' "

However reserved he tends to be, Dokken thinks he has his finger on the pulse of rock 'n' roll fans. "We give them a little of our hearts and souls," he reasons. "There's no wall between us. A lot of people are stingy. They take from their audience and give nothing back. We all drive ourselves as much as possible, especially onstage. You can stand there, sing, be intense and entertaining if you project a bit of yourself. A person who just says, 'I love you, you're the greatest audience in the world'—it's bullshit. They say it every night.

"Music means freedom," he concludes. "You listen to it and escape the bullshit of life that's negative sometimes. It takes you out of your 'down-ness' or makes you even more up. I listen to a song, kick back, go to another place. Music takes me somewhere else, feels good, evokes emotion, and that's nice. That's exactly what it should be." ▣

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The Metal Underground

by Chuck Eddy

Heavy metal is not what I'd call an "art." In fact, especially in light of Blackie Lawless's Padre-spring-training "pose" in a recent issue of this highly respected periodical, seems to me it's more like a *sport*—not terrifically far-removed from luge-racing in the not-yet-(as I write)-completed Winter Olympics at Calgary, or $79-Keiko-swimdress-"wearing" in the current issue of *Sports Illustrated*, or fraternity-steppin' in the new Spike Lee movie! (Which reminds me: Anybody besides me taking note of the sudden revival of Totally Trashy Theatre Themes we're already being bombarded with in '88? Hey an *Action Jackson/Satisfaction* double-bill would be more than just a top-notch tongue-twister—Shaft-revisited blaxploitation meets Carrie Nations-revisited sexploitation; primo, or what?) *Anyway*, to return to the issue at hand, there *have* been attempts over the years to artistify the HM/loud-guitar genre, and most of 'em, needless to say (but I will anyway), have fared pretty darn abysmally in my book. The exceptions—think of the MC5 out of Detroit with *Kick Out The Jams* in '68, MX-80 Sound out of southern Indiana (Mellencamp country!) with *Out Of The Tunnel* in '80, and Rush out of somewhere in the Great White North with "Tom Sawyer" during some Winter Olympics or other in the mid-'70s, I think—have been instances where the aesthetic-aesthetic has been duly balanced by the athletic-aesthetic.

I've been letting the art-metal pile up month after month around this here hacienda, figuring I'd get around to it sooner or later, but I never did. Until now, that is. And by far the coolest art-metal to come my way in recent history is *Inside Little Oral Annie* (Eksakt import, 5038 BC Tilburg, Holland), by four Dutchmen who call themselves **Lul**. Only HM-associated thing I can think to compare it to is Die Kreuzen's *October File*, but that doesn't cut it at all; really, this record is to speed-metal what Wire's *Pink Flag* was to punk rock 10 years ago, if that makes sense—a structural riddle, sort of; a *game*. Wire's an influence: 18 songs, every one of 'em under 2:13, a lot of 'em Fruit-Of-The-Loom-drowningly pretty, most of 'em so cold they're warm, or vice versa. But on the inner sleeve, these guys claim "fandom" to Anthrax, Slayer, C.O.C., M.O.D., Venom, and Nuclear Assault (not to mention: Young Marble Giants, Sigue Sigue Sputnik, B.T.O., MX-80 Sound, Chic, Au Pairs, Heart, Devo, X-Ray Spex, Lynyrd Skynyrd, Ian Dury, and so on), and the riffs (which generally slash tires for about 20 seconds, then turn pretty again) are straight off *Reign In Blood*, or *Master Of Puppets*. Lul walks some skewed kinda tightrope, and they know nets are for sissies.

Next up we've got **By-Products Of America**, who for all I know might be the best unsigned outfit in the world right now, and whose unnamed and labeled demo cassete (c/o Nolan Benz, 207 Erkenbrecher #3, Cincinnati OH, 45229) deserves to become their third (and best) album, 'cause it's got one chunky truckload of pig-funk/bash-and-crash/radiation-thrash groove, and it sends all these U.S.D.A.-choice powerchord-overtones flying back over your hardhat at a furious axis-directed pace that leaves you gasping for Gatorade and salt-tablets. No dorky attempts to act tough, just mid-American non-yups doing-it to-it to fend off that Big Three-Oh that's fast approaching, age-wise; starting-point comes from Pere Ubu (*Dub Housing* rhythms plus *Datapanik In The Year Zero* guitars) and MX-80 Sound, and cover versions come from Henry Mancini and Harry Nilsson. And speaking (one more time!) of MX-80, **Poetraphonics**' *Come Like Bombs* (P-Fon cassette, POB 22113, Sunset, San Francisco, CA 94122) is the most placid and straight-ahead thing to emerge from the MX-80 camp since '83's *Playette* tape; alumni Rich Stim and Dave Mahoney instrumentalize on it, and it's mostly dew-drop-pop heaven-metal with halfway-naive (and sometimes too kitschy) heartfelt heart-chatter (about getting hit by cabs and needing insulin and falling in love and such like), but there's nevertheless some good Manwich riffs that do strange stuff without ever konking you over the head. (For noisier MX-80-related objects, write to Quadruped, 2750 Adeline, Berkeley, CA 94703. They've put out six tapes worth owning in the last two years; I recommend *Half Life*, *O-Type* and *Brutality* most.)

Blind Idiot God are three St. Louis architecture-and-otherwise students not too far into their 20s, and on *Blind Idiot God* (SST, POB 1, Lawndale, CA 90260) they make like the helicopter scene in *Apocalypse Now*, only with bigger guitars. Idea here is to condense Glen Branca's amp-stacking axe-symphonies into maelstrom-progressions of rock song duration. And mostly they do OK, I guess, but they advance beyond mere crescendo-crunch-

ing and truly storm the stomach of the beast only in their update of the Meters' "More Time," a lesson for anybody who thinks Igor Stravinsky's more metal than Ziggy Modeliste. You're totally confused by now, I bet; let's just say B.I.G. sound like Death Angel with Michael J. Fox haircuts and better words (i.e.: none), and leave it at that.

Occupants of interplanetary craft might well prefer *Happy Nightmare Baby* (SST), by Blind Idiot's labelmates, **Opal**—trippily tuneful nova-fuzz Venus-music that's hypnotic and hollow and far more "far out" than I expected it'd be, it oughta have Hawkwind followers jumping for joy like the cow that jumped over an asteroid, and happy owners of T. Rex's *Electric Warrior* won't be asking for their money back, either. **Viv Akauldren** also do a cosmic cosmonaut-prance; on *I'll Call You Sometime* (Akashic, POB 23265, Detroit MI 48223), they mix up art-Zep marching-into-battle vociferousness with a subtle sort of texture-grooving they might or might not have learned off certain German avant-garage imports from the dawn of the '70s, then come alarmingly close to fouling the whole biz up with some of the most overbearing hippie-singing I've heard in years. This is "Progressive"-with-a-capital-"P"-for-"Pretentious"-Rocque, complete with annoying New Age and Moroccan Berber (or Bali Gamelan or something) proclivities. But it's pretty singular, and not really barf-inducing unless you stop holding your nose or start taking it too seriously. Still, you might wanna start with their live 45, "As You Wish," first—a lot more off-the-cuff, and guitar-full, than the LP.

Significantly less artistic than the new

LEE RENALDO

temptible hepsters in Tina Turner wigs, and it's (even) less funny than their last one . . . **Of Cabbages And Kings**' *Of Cabbages And Kings* (Purge EP, 69 W. 9th St. 100, NY, NY 10011) jabberwocks with a marginally tougher emory-board-to-the-adrenal-glands axe-sound than your average Gotham-style hate-muck, but it don't swing much, and it's got moronic poetry about lustrous flames and cavaliers and involuntary spasms, some of it penned by some turkey named Baudelaire who ain't even in the band . . . **Savage Republic**'s *Live Trek* (Nate Starkman, 544 Mateo St., Los Angeles, CA 90013) is two discs of pseudo-stark gradual-acceleration guitar whorls over mock-tribal rhythms that often come from oil kettles. Amusing enough in the background, but up close the only interesting thing is the way the clapping sounds so much like the audience at a golf-match . . . And **Live Skull**'s *Dusted* (Homestead, POB 570, Rockville Centre, NY 11571-0570) sounds exactly the same as Savage Republic, except with less of a beat. If you still play your King Crimson albums every day, you might like it. Me, I'll stick with Def Leppard's "Hysteria" single: I mean, if Poison can be the Bay City Rollers, why *shouldn't* these guys be Badfinger?

AC/DC album: **Lee Ranaldo**'s *From Here To Infinity* (SST EP) is a Sonic Youth guitarist plucking out incidental caterwaul on a disc designed to wreck your stylus if you let it. You won't listen to the thing, but it's fun to look at . . . **Big Stick**'s *Crack Attack* (Buy Our EP, POB 363, Vauxhall, NJ 07088) is a wise-ass skronk-plus-beatbox novelty record by two con-

SONIC YOUTH

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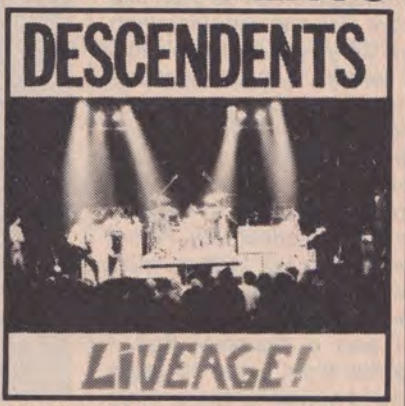
DESCENDENTS



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New Metal

JOE SATRIANI

Surfing with Satch.

by Don Kaye

Joe Satriani is quickly becoming a phenomenon. His second album, *Surfing With The Alien*, is steadily climbing the charts, he's played sold-out shows in places like New York's Bottom Line, he's gotten rave reviews for albums and shows alike, and he's going on tour with Mick Jagger. What a life, huh?

What has made Joe popular? I don't care much for guitar heroes and their masturbatory self-indulgence, but that's not what Joe's about. He writes *songs*, with melodies and hooks and all that stuff, so when he does whip out the flash, it really startles you. A friend remarked "He plays guitar on those songs like he was singing along to them," and that's a pretty good description of what Joe Satriani's music is all about.

At first, he was a secret among music biz pros: That guitar player up in Frisco who taught all these young whippersnappers how to play, like Steve Vai and Kirk Hammett and Gary Holt. It took a while for people to realize that Joe also made music of his own, and now they wish they had discovered him sooner. Joe Satriani's music is a true pleasure to listen to—and in his quiet, modest way, he's a pleasure to talk with as well.

Could you go into your background a bit?

I was a drummer first. I started when I was 10 years old and played for two or three years. My parents encouraged musical education. I seemed to have some drumming ability, but I quickly got bored with it and dropped music altogether. Eventually, I got into guitar, like a lot of other people, because Hendrix died. I was really into Hendrix at the time, and when he died, I felt like that was some kind of sign that I should pick up the guitar. I started out playing along to records, and reading songbooks, things like that.

I tried taking lessons for a while, but I gave it up because I couldn't stand the songs they taught me. I played on and off for some time, but a little talent popped out, so I stuck with it and have been doing it ever since.

What other guitarists inspired you?

I was really into—and still am into—the work that Jimmy Page has done. Jeff Beck, Johnny Winter, Eric Clapton. I had records by these guys and just jammed to them all the time. My parents were into jazz and so I got exposed to that. I liked Keith Richards too. I had a pretty diverse set of influences, mainly because I came from a family of seven and everyone had their own thing that they liked.

You were born in Long Island, but moved out to San Francisco nine years ago, and got involved with a group called the Squares, right?

Yeah, that's right! That was myself on guitar and vocals, Andy Milton on lead vocals and bass, and Jeff Campitelli on drums, who plays on my albums now. We made some really nice demos, but no records. We were waiting for that major deal and it never came. The stuff I did with the Squares was totally different to what I'm doing now. We were more of a power pop band. If you can imagine Motley Crue meeting Paul McCartney, that's sort of what we were doing. It was weird, kind of our reaction to the new wave thing, but nobody liked it.

So in the years before your current success, were you able to make a living just by your guitar, through teaching or whatever?

I got by mainly by doing odd gigs, teaching, sessions. There were times when teaching took up the bulk of it, and then it would swing into some other facet of the music business. I've worked in music stores, I did Top 40 gigs, I took on odd jobs. I used to make liquid bracelets for a living. You name it, I've done it, although I haven't been a taxi driver yet.

How did your first solo record (Not Of This Earth) get off the ground?

Well, there's actually a record that I did before that, that's out of print now, and I see that as my art record. It was an all-guitar record, and the guitar was doing, in addition to guitar stuff, bass-type things, percussive things. I did it just a few months before I left the Squares, and I saw it as being just so radical to what people knew me for that it would open a door for me into something new. The record was a complete financial failure, but it was sort of fun to do. It was called *Joe Satriani*, and I sold a few hundred here and in Europe, and then I never bothered to do another pressing.

What prompted *Not Of This Earth* was my getting a free credit card in the mail. I decided to run into the studio and charge the record on the card, and it worked! I was really gonna just put it out myself again, but I sent a tape to Steve (Vai) and he told me that a friend of his, Cliff Cultreri from Important Records (Relativity's parent company), might be interested in this. I didn't even think of trying to sell it at first, because people were always telling me my stuff wasn't this or wasn't that. That bothered me, because I knew what it was. Cliff responded positively, brought his company around to his way of thinking, and they licensed my record and signed me for a few more.

***How do you compare* Not . . . *to* Surfing?**

The first one's a little more esoteric, definitely more eclectic in its style. I think it's just a reflection of what I was into. They were recorded two years apart, and that makes a large difference right there. I live life like anybody else, I go through lots of different experiences, and that's how I come up with my material. I just write what's on my mind. In the two years between records, I did sessions with a lot of people I never thought I'd be doing sessions with, so there was a whole new set of musical influences.

I think *Surfing* . . . reflects a genuine style, because I grew up playing rock 'n' roll, and that's something that comes naturally more than anything else. Fusion isn't really my first calling, even though I enjoy playing it. When you get really down to the bone, I'm really part of the rock generation.

The most striking thing about your work is that there are songs here, not just guitar indulgence.

There are lots of records out there, and lots of guitar players who can really play very well, they've got the thing down well. I've played guitar for such a long time, I've heard myself play more than anybody else, and the last thing I want to do is listen to myself just kind of whang-whanga away. As a listener, I'm interested in great songs, and I approach these records by thinking, "First, let's get the songs down" and then, "Now let's see if I can express myself within the song, on the guitar, in some unusual way."

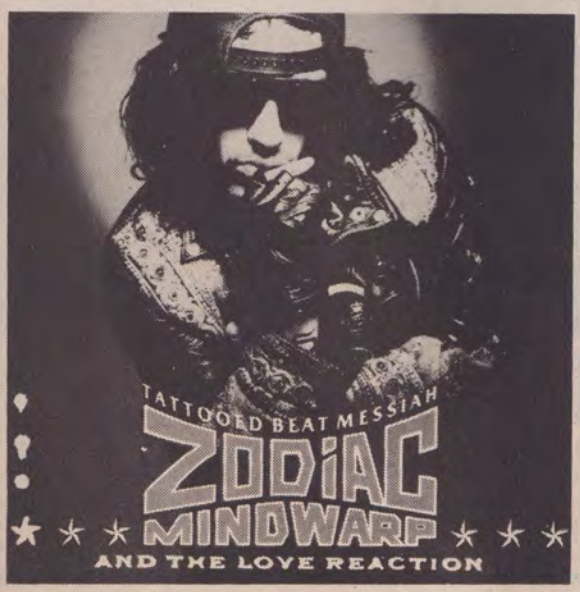
What kind of general overview can you give on the star guitarists you've taught?

Although all the people I've taught have very diverse personalities, and each one carries himself differently in either the way he plays or acts, they each manifested potential. When I was teaching Steve, I only had two or three students at the time, so it was easy for me to watch his growth. I knew early on he was going to be a great musician. All those guys exhibited an ability to go past technique and come up with things that were truly interesting. In that respect, I could tell they were special, but not because of any talent of mine in perception.

I wish the best for all of them. I know how hard they've tried and how genuine their feelings are about what they're doing. I love it to see how successful they're becoming. I suppose it's like seeing your own kid making waves in the world—it's a great feeling. I really like teaching, and it's a natural drive for me to get my students to the point where they can be as successful as possible.

What point are you at right now? What is your ultimate goal as a musician, and how far along that path are you?

I don't see it as a path with an end. I just want to continue to play and write, and I hope that it still fascinates me all the time, the way it does now. On a mundane level, I want to make more records and play for people, but I really just want to keep exploring.



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VERTIGO

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POWERTRIP

The inventors of speedmetal are *back*.

by Chuck Eddy

Jeff Dahl's Powertrip have always been ahead-of-their-time dudes, no two ways about it. "As for 'inventing' speedmetal, that's a weird way to put it," Jeff says. "But we were the first guys using the *term* speedmetal. We started calling ourselves that back around '81 or '82; we got it from an Iggy interview from the early '70s, only he wasn't talking about velocity—he was talking about the kind of *drugs* he used." Powertrip put out their only album, *When We Cut We Bleed*, in 1983. Now it's a collector's item (runs for $15, Dahl claims, and damned if I didn't sell mine for $2.50 a few years back), but it's just been reissued (with a red sleeve instead of the original black one) on PVC Records. And before summer's here, PVC's also slated to release both a Dahl solo album (*I Kill Me*, featuring ex-Dead Boy Cheetah Chrome and a coterie of Blue Cheer/Angry Samoans/Lazy Cowgirls moonlighters) and a second Powertrip LP. The latter (produced, like its predecessor, by Motley Crue/Bobby Womack *auteur* Glenn Feit) was all set to come out in '84, but never did. It was gonna be called *Speedmetal Rules*. "That kind of dates it a little bit, though," Dahl editorializes. "So we're thinking of changing it to *Speedmetal Sucks*, just to see if we'll get a rise out of somebody."

"We really have nothing to do with what's called speedmetal now," the singer explains. "We might've influenced a few people, but I don't relate to much of it myself. All bands like Metallica are, to me, notes for the sake of notes, velocity for the sake of velocity—it's like a faster version of Yes' *Tales From Topographic Oceans*. We opened for Slayer once, back when they were still mostly covering Aerosmith songs; they were real nice guys, in jeans and T-shirts. But I don't really like their style of music—it's not melodic, and you can hear a couple good riffs sometimes, but I hate how all the songs are just a bunch of variations on the same song. Where I come from is the Stooges, MC5, Blue Cheer, music like that. I've got the first two or three Sabbath albums, but after that, they lost me. The only band Powertrip ever really related to was Motorhead. Our slogan was always that we had the correct mixture of velocity, energy and melody."

The original Powertrippers were all dumb-looking tough guys who rode Harleys, probably real fast (maybe even without helmets sometimes!). (But the new drummer and bassist don't ride at all.) *When We Cut We Bleed* has a song called "Iron Horse"; "Just one of your regular biker/rocker tunes," Dahl explicates. "I was definitely aware that Motorhead had their own song of that name, and I'm not sure whose is better—I think they're both pretty strong. I wish I could sing like Lemmy, though." Another rude and crude (and catchy—sounds almost like the Buzzcocks' "Orgasm Addict"!) Powertrip-debut-LP screed is "Lab Animal." Quoth Dahl: "It's about a girl I know who had gotten thrown in a woman's prison, and just basically got her ass kicked royally." His pick-hit from *Speedmetal Rules Or Sucks* (which he refers to as "our *Overkill*") is "Sweet 16 D.O.A.," "about watching people really destroy themselves, like when we used to play in front of these completely strung-out 16-year-olds."

"Platypus Man," on *I Kill Me*, is a tribute to Radio Birdman, Australia's late-'70s Stooge-rock revivalists. "The solo album is not like Power-

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trip," Dahl says. "Most of it's like the Stooges or MC5, but there's three short, sort-of-Johnny-Thunders-ish, acoustic numbers. One of 'em sounds a bit like 'Signed D.C.' by Love." The theme of Dahl's new solo single on Bomp Records, "Suicide City"/"Whatever Happened To Fun," oughta be self-explanatory. "I'm definitely not glamourizing it," he says, "but I've gotten a little obsessed with how much people do to hurt themselves—especially after I quit drinking myself, four years ago."

He used to drink *a lot*. And he didn't stop there: In the now-semi-legendary grunge-after-birth ensemble Vox Pop, "if we were gonna play some night, we'd ask for a $200 guarantee up front, buy as much drugs and alcohol as we could, and at noon we'd start getting as drunk as humanly possible—it was an experiment to see how screwed up we could get. One time we were all drunk onstage, and Billy Idol was there, and he came up and asked if we knew 'L.A. Woman.' We didn't know it was him; figured it was just some guy with a fake British accent. We told him, 'Sure, we know every song in the world!' He came off the stage slapping us on the back and telling us how great we were." Vox Pop also used to cover selections by Grand Funk, Faust and the Runaways, among others. "Around '78 or something, we were the first band doing any glam stuff, wearing girls' make-up and all that," Dahl claims. They also wore Blue Cheer T-shirts, and the sleeve of their *The Band, The Myth, The Volume* EP proudly displays one male member's male member. "And we definitely preceded all that anti-music stuff you hear now—live, we were completely over-the-top. Compared to us, those guys like Sonic Youth and Big Black are completely commercial." And unlike Sonic Youth and Big Black, Vox Pop played rock 'n' roll, not art rock.

Dahl comes from Oahu, Hawaii. At 17, he joined the Army, and worked as an air traffic controller at the Pentagon Heliport, in Arlington. In 1976, "after I read a couple reviews I disagreed with," he put out a single called 'Rock And Roll Critic,' which this particular rock 'n' roll critic has never heard. He did a stint for a while singing for the Angry Samoans and now works in Warner Bros. Records' tape library. Two years ago he contributed comprehensive liner-notes to Rhino Records' excellent Blue Cheer compilation, *Louder Than God*. ("We're trying to talk PVC into doing a Dickie Peterson solo LP," he reveals. Dickie, as all true headbangers know, played bass in Blue Cheer.) Jeff's favorite TV show, "now that they're taking *Magnum P.I.* off the air," is *Alf*, which he calls "just unbelievable—so bad it's great." "I kill me," Dahl points out, is what the brown furry big-nosed Melmackian one says, whenever he cracks a joke.

MANITOBA'S WILD KINGDOM

The return of the handsomest man in rock 'n' roll!

by George "Metal" Smith

There was a howling blizzard outside but I had an appointment with destiny. Well, maybe not destiny—but I did have to make it to Hoboken, METAL, in its inestimable wisdom, had sent me to root out and bring back the truth on one of the liv-

Photo by Ebet Roberts

ing legends of hard rock—Handsome Dick Manitoba and his new band, Wild Kingdom.

"But wait just one minute!" saith the feisty readership of METAL. "Who is this Manitoba dude?"

Time to listen up, squirts. Handsome Dick was THE SECRET WEAPON and primo frontperson for the Dictators, who just happened to represent the zenith of metal from 1975-1978. Never mind that the hard rock audience never cottoned to 'em in a big way. Who could count on fans who rolled over and played dead with the rest of the arena acts that made the mid-'70s such a drag anyway?

In their short career the Dics gave us three albums that elevated the stupidity of teenage existence to heavenly glory amid the blaze of multi-stoked guitars loud and fast enough to make you want to dance and shout or smash your head against the nearest wall. Ross The Boss supplied gutsy guitar heroism (when guitar heroes were out of style) party genius Andy (nee Adny) Shernoff added songs, ideology, and that most important of ingredients—leadership.

Why, then, did the Dictators fail? There were many reasons, but they just ain't important anymore. It's only important that Shernoff and Manitoba have returned with a vengeance—motivated by a couple of events which Dick describes.

"We (the Dictators) did a couple of reunion gigs at the Ritz and after the first one I told myself I didn't wanna do it for a living. After the second it was, 'Yeah, I can do this for a living.' It was the high life. Who would understand?"

I would. That second Dics reunion was an exercise in true mania, climaxed by Dick hurling bags of White Castle burgers into the audience while some guy was publicly decked by a gorilla-sized bouncer. (Those lily livers who dislike the above tableau should shaddup and wake up to the fact that violence and thugs are part and parcel with the territory of metal.)

But you can't have a real band with only two members, so Daniel Rey (guitar) and J.P. Patterson (drums) were brought on board. Of this, Andy says, "Danny and J.P. were in the front row of every Dictators show."

Daniel adds by way of explanation, "We were learning the ropes. I was grooming myself for the position."

Onstage it's apparent that the grooming has paid off. Wild Kingdom deliver an airtight set of songs ranging from old Dictators' chestnuts to new anthemic shouters like "Haircut & Attitude" and thrashing speedmetal one step on from "Faster & Louder." Dick Manitoba remains the apotheosis of the perfect hammy showman—a feature which is downright rare (if not extinct) in contempo-metal.

With a mix like this, Wild Kingdom draws a crowd whose membership ranges from oldsters (like myself) who remember past glory to the very young who come for the excitement. Andy elaborates: "I like playing to all ages because you get these 10-year-old kids with shaved skulls dressed up like hardcore knuckleheads. They're completely wild and abandoned and the way they go at it reminds me of why you love rock 'n' roll. They have all this built-up energy because they can't drink and they can't get laid so they run into each other and it's just total—MOSH!"

However, Andy is worried that all might not be well in the slam pit. "The problem is that these little kids knocking into other guys might increase their homosexual appetites. I must admit I have a slight fear about how it will affect them. I'm concerned."

An album is the next thing you'll see from these boys as we let Dick close with these reassuring words of rock 'n' roll attitude: "I'm just as nuts now as when I was 18. I'm never gonna grow up!"

D.R.I.

4 OF A KIND

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METAL BLADE RECORDS

ENIGMA

NRG

Heavy blues-rock, L.A. style.

by Ellanne Halbersberg

Yeah, yeah, yeah—you've heard it all before: the journalistic drooling about this week's Next Big Thing. So, far be it from me to try to sell such astute readers as yourselves on yet another new and noteworthy act. Suffice only to say that when NRG's hot little cassette landed in my mailbox, the band's publicists were thoughtful enough to enclose complimentary flame-retardant gloves in the package to insure my safety in handling the goods!

NRG, as they stand today, are drummer Jim Darby, bassist Daryl Otto, guitarist Bruce Draper, and vocalist Todd Griffin. The collective name has been circulating on the Los Angeles club scene for some three years, but the real buzz started going 'round in '86, as the line-up stabilized into its current state. Darby explains, "Todd and Daryl founded the group a year before I joined. Daryl was new on the scene, and Todd was looking for musicians. They called themselves NRG because of an interview Robert Plant had done where he made the comment that Led Zeppelin was cosmic energy. Zeppelin is such a big influence on everyone that they named the band Energy, then changed it to NRG."

Other influences members cite are Elvis Presley, Jim Morrison, Jimmy Page, John Entwistle, Keith Moon and other assorted greats, which should give you some idea of where their sound is headed. Meanwhile, after Darby was enlisted on the basis of one rehearsal, NRG went through the usual revolving door of guitarists. Darby picks up, "Bruce and Todd had worked together in the past. Bruce was playing in a new wave band, but Todd knew he could really rock. At the time, NRG had a different style, more metal (versus what now drips of blues entrenched in a heavy '70s feel). We were looking for an Yngwie Malmsteen type of guitarist but in Bruce, we got someone instead influenced by Jeff Beck. The chemistry worked and after a week's rehearsals, we played the Country Club."

NRG's members "all had experience doing demos, but no one was in any group of note prior to this one, no names that you would recognize or know about. If we had found a situation like this one before, we would still be in it! It took us until now to find what we really wanted. if somethng were to happen to anyone in this group, NRG would be no more."

Mere babes in the chronological sense, NRG have considerable experience in their respective areas. "We've been involved in music our entire lives," Darby explains. "Bruce has been playing the longest. He's skilled on drums, keyboards, and clarinets in addition to the guitar. Todd started out as a guitarist in a church band, and still plays guitar and harmonica, aside from singing. Daryl plays bass, keyboards, and guitar, and was in a lot of cover bands. I was originally a guitarist, and played trumpet in school. I've been playing drums for five-and-a-half years, and before that, was playing on other people's drum kits every chance I got!"

Recently, NRG has been making headlines in the regional press. They played L.A.'s KLOS Christmas Party, have sold out dates at the Whiskey and the Roxy with virtually no advertising, and ranked first in a San Bernardino poll of favorite bands. They're shopping the aforementioned six-song tape, and record companies are sniffing around their door. Everyone seems to want a slice of their pie. Even Carmine Appice jumped into the action, joining engineer Angelo Arcuri (Dio) to produce the life-threatening demo.

Not ones to sit back and bask in the glory of their newfound recognition, NRG are sharing a house where they also rehearse five hours a day, every day. They're stockpiling themselves on songs. "Everything on the demo except one track was written two months prior to recording," Darby remarks. "We went in with five songs, of which one had been written six months prior. 'Roll Me' was written in the studio. Everyone writes; we all work on words and music. We originally planned to release a five-song EP on our own label. We did some showcases, and when we went in the studio, we had some journalists, photographers, and musicians coming by. People were freaking out over the material, and they all suggested we not release independently, but wait until we were signed."

NRG, while building up their repertoire, is eagerly anticipating putting pen to paper and returning to the studio. "It was a lot of fun this time," Darby observes, "but basically it comes down to signing with a label, recording albums, and touring them. Playing live—that's the thing we most want to do."

Photo by Alex Solca

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—Metal Gear—

The Jesters Of Destiny: Look Back And Laugh

by Billy Cioffi

There are those who would claim that metal is a somewhat humorless genre. With all the make-up, mascara, Marshalls, mugging and mayhem though, one must take much of it with a grain of salt. You couldn't exactly call the Jesters Of Destiny a breath of *fresh* air because a couple of the guys seem to have gargled with the contents of a brown paper bag and a suspicious smoky cloud hovers over the other boyos. The Jesters do seem to represent a healthy (if anyone could use that term in the context of these mugs) sense of the ridiculous—combined with some pretty righteous chops.

Bruce Duff, aside from being the bass player and lead singer for the group, is also a Los Angeles music journalist of note. Duff formed the band with guitarist/engineer Ray Violet, and when the two began to work on a recording project together in 1985, they realized that they had a mutual musical affection for each other's ideas. For several years, Duff had been on the scene in L.A. playing in various quasi-legendary bands that dwell on the artistic outer edge of inner Hollywood. In the netherworld of the Orange's musical ghetto, metal, punk, reggae and rock 'n' whatever have very indistinct borderlines. Los Angeles musicians give new meaning to Ben Franklin's revolutionary warning, "We must all hang together or we will surely hang separately!" While writing a club scene column for L.A.'s small but influential *Music Connection*, he played with important Hollywood bands like Twisted Roots and 45 Grave—the latter being a harbinger of things to come in speedmetal metaphysics.

Co-founder Ray Violet has a myriad of chart credits on the production end, particularly in radical funk—the outer fringes of R&B begun by George Clinton, Parliament, the Ohio Players, Junie Morrison, Laverrt and Edmund Sylvers. Violet has worked as a recordist with members of all the above.

"Ray was working out at Dawnbreaker Studios," recalls Duff, "and he got a bunch of time to do some demos. He called me and my roommate and the deal was we'd play on the things and they'd record a song of ours. A song he wrote called 'Digging That Grave' and a song of mine called 'End Of Time' seemed to fit together. So we decided to make a band out of it and we put together a couple of guys and made the first record. We did the record first and started playing live afterwards."

The first record was called *Fun At The Funeral*. The record was released on Dimension Records and received quite a bit of critical notice—both positive *and* negative. With their mixture of crunch and psychedelia and Duff's amazing tenor voice (he's not called Screaming Lord Duff for nothing), the Jesters were committed to the music. As with most bands, they experienced some initial growing pains in their line-up. Several of the early limbs were severed to protect the tree and rumor has it the boys lost one of their early drummers to religion or something.

"Before we got a record out," adds Violet, "we used to leave the vocals off the tracks and invite chicks into the studio to sing on them. We'd tell them they were going to be stars!"

"An old scam," says Duff admiringly. "Still worthy!"

The current permanent line-up now includes drummer Dani Blaze and teen guitar phenom Brian Damage.

"This is definitely the best line-up," according to Duff. "Which makes it difficult because if these guys quit we gotta find guys who are better!"

"Why should we leave all this poverty?" declares the Jersey-born Blaze in a show of solidarity.

The most recent Jester release is *In A Nostalgic Mood*—a collection of the band's favorite oldies—and it's as diverse a collection of thrash, trash and metal mash as you'll find in the record bins. The LP features covers of "Foxy Lady," Black Sabbath's "Electric Funeral," Creedence Clearwater's "Fortunate Son" and Little Richard's "Girl Can't Help It." The songs, however, are all cleverly rearranged to sound like a 14 car pile-up at 5:30 on the San Diego Freeway. Actually, it's closer to a metal Mothers Of Invention. The playing is intricate and inventive with chops galore and Duff's voice is capable of shattering glass at certain volumes.

"We were originally going to do 'Electric Funeral' on a record of mostly original stuff but we felt we weren't ready to do the whole album yet," Duff recalls. "It

was getting time to do a record so we just did covers of some of the stuff we did at our live shows. We did songs we all liked and just worked them up differently. They all sort of evolved out of rehearsals and jams."

They're currently writing and recording a new LP entitled *No Laughing Matter* with the now solid line-up. Blaze, in particular, is contributing much more to the band's arrangements with his overpowering straight-ahead style.

"I use a double bass kit," says Blaze. "I think that's one reason they hired me. The last drummer was a single bass drummer and they needed the heavier sound. All of the new tunes have a lot of double bass work."

"Yeah," Duff chimes in. "Blaze writes the foundation and here's how he does it: 'OK, our new song's going to go like this . . .' then he breaks into some plodding monstrous thing that sounds like somebody throwing bowling balls down the stairs."

"I use Slingerland bass drums and Rogers tom-toms," interjects Blaze. "I just started working with Sabian cymbals. I think they sound the best. I use a lot of customized hardware."

Duff, Violet and Brian Damage are traditional in their taste. "We're Gibson and Fender players. We're into Americana," Duff says with a salute.

With their sarcastic lyrical content and wacky, flashy arrangements, the question is where does it end or really begin for the Marx Brothers of metal?

"Our lead player, Brian, is as good as anyone out there. When people see us they will see we're unique and no one can categorize us," declares Ray Violet. "In this world of categorization, that's not bad for us if we have a sound that catches on."

"Then people can just make up a category," Duff adds. "They do it all the time."

Alternative metal maybe?

"Why not? What's the Cult? Are they metal or hard rock? What's Guns N' Roses? We're just a band that plays really hard, kicking shit. It's still just guitars, drums, rock 'n' roll!"

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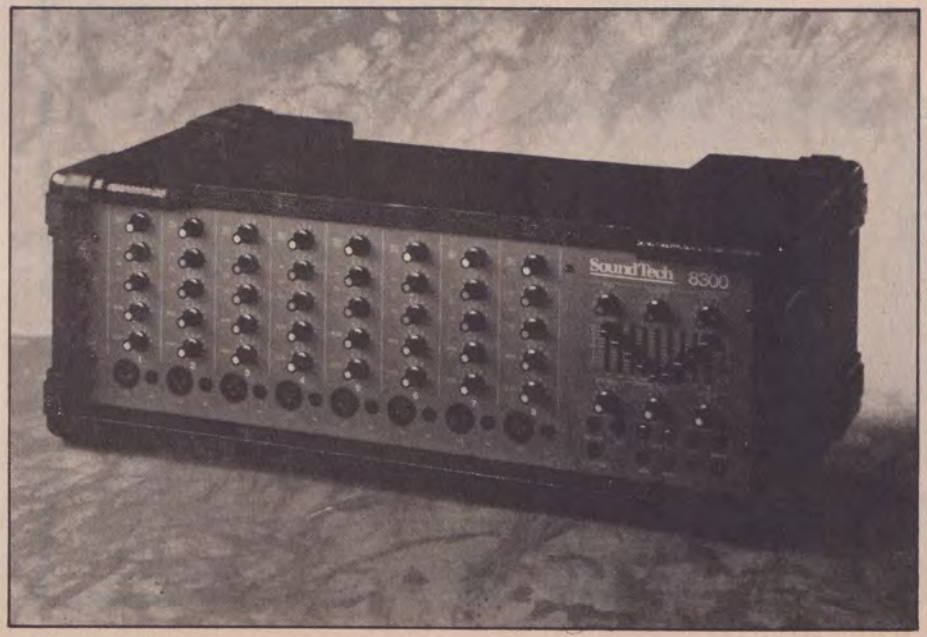

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LETTERS:
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

PLAY THAT FUNKY MUSIC, WHITE BOY

I was reading the April issue of METAL and I was checking out Anthrax's interview. Well, I read where they said "but I can't imagine Run-D.M.C.'s audience getting into the rest of our songs." Well, I want them to imagine it. Because this is one rap fan that has gotten into the rest of their songs. I don't know much about other speedmetal bands, but if they sound as good as Anthrax, then I can't wait to give 'em a listen. By the way, maybe someone could explain to me what the hell a "poseur" is?

D.J. Craigie Dee
Fresno, CA

*(**po•seur/(')pō'zer/**[F, fr.* poser *to pose* + -eur -or]: an Anglo-Saxon rapper, particularly one from burgs void of ethnicity.—*Ed.)*

TAKE MOTLEY CRUE . . . PLEASE!

Your readers poll sucks, what is wrong with you people?! Do you really think that Motley Crue is a better band than Whitesnake or Def Leppard? Rick Allen does better with one arm than Tommy Lee does with two! Rudy Sarzo makes Nikki Sixx look like he should be back in the factory screwing caps on toothpaste, and will somebody please send Mick Mars into orbit? And if you're going to compare David Coverdale (one of the sexiest men alive) to a dog then I might as well tell you that the first thing I think of when I see Vince Neil is six-month-old rat puke. The only thing in this poll that I agree with (besides Best Singer) is Poison as worst Group. My friend plays guitar better than C.C. DeVille and she's only *thinking* about taking lessons. If these "guys" ever do start a headlining tour, it'll die of loneliness. I ask you—10 years from now, will people remember a band who only knows three chords or a band with true musical talent? Oh yeah—when the *real* readers poll comes out, let me know. Obviously this one was just a joke.

Princess St. John
Poughkeepsie, NY

COOTIES REACH EPIDEMIC PROPORTIONS!

In reference to your review on Dokken's *Back For The Attack*, in the April '88 issue of METAL, I happen to differ with your opinion of the band. If Dokken was, and I quote, "a failed prototype of Bon Jovi," what do you call Aerosmith? If anything can come out of an acid vat looking as good as they do, why don't you try it? If you had half a brain, you'd know the difference between Dokken's sound and Def Leppard's sound, Dokken's sound and Van Halen's sound and the other bands you named in your worthless drivel. That was no offense to any of the

bands you mentioned. Just you. Don Dokken and George Lynch have repeatedly stated, in better magazines of course, that the whole outrage about them hating each other is blown out of proportion by people like you. And what kind of trip were you on when you said they had "cooties"?

April Hall
Eagletown, OK

P.S. You'd better thank God in heaven (if he still claims you) that you didn't demean Mick Brown in *any* way.

(How could we? Mick Brown's the coolest thing since, uh, since Buster *Brown.—Ed.)*

THE NUTS & BOLTS OF POISON

I'd like to say that I am not at all surprised by Poison's attack on Bryn Bridenthal, after all, their music is so weak they have to choose another way to get attention. But I am very surprised and would love to kick all of their nuts (assuming they have any) up into their nostrils. How many men out there think these guys wouldn't last two seconds against a man? Me too. And of course, the attack came en masse. I suppose if it had occured out of the public eye it would have been a gang rape as well. Has any action been taken against these sick excuses for human waste? Let's see some reporting on how the industry supports its women employees. I, for one, am sick to death of women in music getting shit on because they aren't men. All the men I know like women, but then we have Poison. Face it, some of us knew they were buttslammers all along! Think about what they've done next time you think about supporting their sick asses.

Not amused by misogynists,
R.O.K.
Hayward, CA

(Isn't that just like a woman?—Ed.)

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METAL MAR '86 (537) Metal Mania! Kiss, Motley Crue, AC/DC, Ozzy, Dio, Venom, Ratt, Grim Reaper, Anthrax, Heaven!

METAL OCT. '85 (536) Actually become Metal! Motley Crue, Ratt, Uli Jon Roth, History of Glitter Rock, and more!

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GUNS 'N' ROSES
Photo by Gene Ambo

Live Metal

ALICE COOPER
MOTORHEAD
FASTER PUSSYCAT
Long Beach Arena
Long Beach, CA
February 26, 1988

by David Sprague and Steve Peters

DAVE: I was worried about this show even before we got to the first alcohol/fireworks/Spam checkpoint. Seeing all those guys drinking real cheap beer in front of cars that had Grateful Dead bumperstickers. . .

STEVE: Maybe they were six months early for the next Dead show.

DAVE: I guess so. That really made me crave a falafel, though.

STEVE: Why? So you could throw it at Taime Downe?

DAVE: Yeah. I thought you told me we'd get there just in time to *miss* Faster Pussycat.

STEVE: Well, we only had to see 'em do two songs.

DAVE: But one of them was "Honky Tonk Women"! Keith Richards must be rolling over in his grave.

STEVE: Keith Richards isn't dead.

DAVE: He's not? Well. . . imagine he was and he had a funeral, right? And Faster Pussycat decided to go and insisted on paying tribute by playing that song, and upset the mourners so much that we had to break off diplomatic relations with England. What then?

STEVE: We probably wouldn't be able to go down to the Cat And Fiddle and drink Harp Ale.

DAVE: Bastards!

STEVE: I don't want to talk about Faster Pussycat. We'll do that if they ever get to headline.

DAVE: Let's make sure they never do!

STEVE: Yeah. They got the Hawthorne babes better seats than Alice got us.

DAVE: I really like girls.

STEVE: I wonder if Faster Pussycat do?

DAVE: Probably not. But I bet Motorhead like girls.

STEVE: Yeah. Motorhead's *cool*.

DAVE: And *loud*.

STEVE: I wonder if they beat up Faster Pussycat for fun after their set?

DAVE: Probably—that dry ice does things to a man.

STEVE: Dry ice is *cool*. What would a metal show be without dry ice?

DAVE: A hockey game?

STEVE: Puck you.

DAVE: No, really. My blood really started *pumping* when they did "Ace Of Spades" and "Killed By Death" back to back.

STEVE: It made me wanna hit something. Why didn't you join me in the pit?

DAVE: There weren't any girls down there.

STEVE: You like girls, don't you?

DAVE: I *really* like girls!

STEVE: Well, why don't we just skip the review and use this space as a forum for furthering our lustful desires?

DAVE: Groovy.

STEVE: OK. Um. . . let's have all the girls who read METAL write us letters. . .

DAVE: With photos?

STEVE: Yeah! Photos! No wait—this is dumb. We'll probably get more letters

Photos by (left) Gene Kirkland; (top right) Gene Ambo; (bottom right) Frank White

from irate Faster Pussycat fans than from *real* women.

DAVE: But they should still send photos.

STEVE: Uh-huh . . . Well, we might as well talk about Alice Cooper now.

DAVE: Why?

STEVE: Because people who read an Alice Cooper review will want to read about Alice Cooper.

DAVE: Ingrates! Well let's tell them just how low Alice has sunk.

STEVE: Yeah, the new stuff is . . .

DAVE: Wow, this is a nice couch!

STEVE: . . . lame enough. But why'd he have to go and desecrate stuff like "Billion Dollar Babies" and "Is It My Body"?

DAVE: It was like Stars On 45. With blood.

STEVE: Yeah—the blood-filled balloons. He didn't have those the first time I saw him on this tour.

DAVE: You've seen this show *before*?

STEVE: Yeah, last year. In Oxnard.

DAVE: Oxnard? This guy I know cleans pools there. He used to be a rock critic.

STEVE: That really does look like a comfortable couch.

DAVE: I used to really like Alice—but this new stuff about chopping, folding, spindling, mutilating . . . it's worse than W.A.S.P. on Dramamine.

STEVE: It's worse than Celtic Frost on a sunny day!

DAVE: It's worse than Motley Crue being eaten by pygmies!

STEVE: But wouldn't that be good?

DAVE: Well . . . *maybe*. But that's not the point. The point is Alice's show. It's Las Vegas . . . it's *The Gong Show* . . .

STEVE: It's a sinking boat in a sea of metal despair.

DAVE: Shut up! I'm really ticked off, thinking about Cooper up there just going through the motions. Anybody coulda done it. It could've been Richard Dawson.

STEVE: But Richard Dawson *kisses* women. Alice slits their throats, like before "Roses And White Lace." I guess *he* doesn't like girls.

DAVE: I do. I *really* like girls!

STEVE: OK already! Do you think our readers care?

DAVE: Do you think they care about Alice? Nobody at the show seemed to.

STEVE: Until Guns N' Roses came out and joined him on "Under My Wheels" for the encore.

DAVE: Yeah, they all went pretty wild when the G N' R record played between sets too.

STEVE: That's 'cause Guns N' Roses are *good*.

DAVE: Yeah. *Good*.

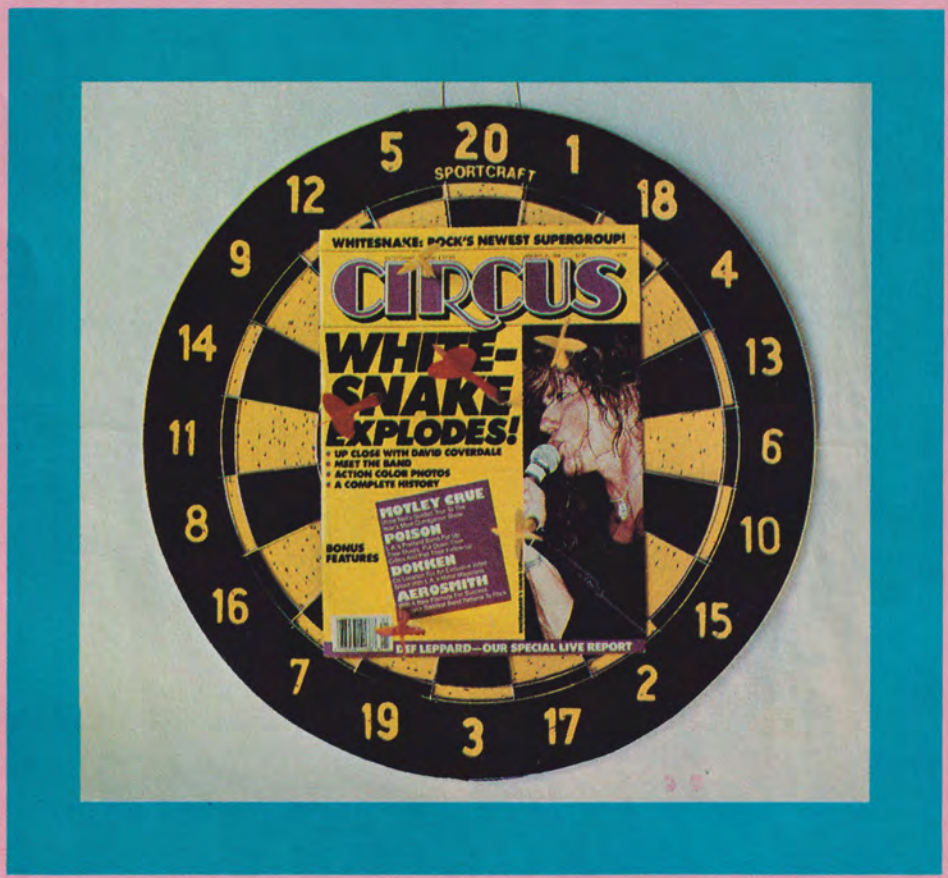
STEVE: We should go see Guns N' Roses real soon.

DAVE: Yeah. Bet *they* draw some good-looking girls. ◙

Son Of Rating The Metal Magazines

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES IN HARD ROCK JOURNALISM BECKON!

by George "Metal" Smith



The number of hard rock bands one can listen to these days is mind-boggling. The number of *good* hard rock bands in that collection is not so mind-boggling. No matter. A growing number of mags devoted to the coverage of all that is metal are here to provide you with all the personality, color, dirt and critical analysis needed on your favorite artist, however large or small.

Should you then rush right out to your favorite newsstand and scarf up every mag that you can find so as not to miss out on anything in the world of metal? Maybe that wouldn't be such a good idea—for two reasons. The first is that it's expensive. I ran up close to a $50 tab doing that very fool thing. Second, it's not necessary.

All metal mags are definitely not created equal. They vary widely in quality and coverage depending upon which segment of the hard rock audience their editors feel they must address. Unfortunately, there is also a lot of repetition, i.e., you can find the Great Kat ranting and bragging in 60 percent of this month's offerings. And how many stories on Chuck Eddy's "False Metal Five" (Bon Jovi, Cinderella, Motley Crue, Poison and Whitesnake) do ya really *want* to read?

What's needed is a short tour of the available fare so that you can stock your library with the best of 'em and become a scholar of metal—just like the sage dons who write for the mag you're holding.

Let's begin!

CIRCUS

Many years ago, when I was just a lad I couldn't wait to run down to the corner store to see if the new issue of *Circus* was available. I thrilled to pieces on nifty bands like Iggy & The Stooges, the Amboy Dukes, Nazareth and Slade. There was even a funky record review section that tried to include everything and gave out ratings ranging from double hearts (highest) to old boots (lowest). I thought it was great.

Then things changed. Only the most mainstream acts graced the pages of *Circus*. The review section went to sleep. Now the mag is a slick read loaded with colorful photos and repetitious stories on the mega-stars of hard rock.

However, it is of little interest to anyone who considers themselves to be more than a dilettante of metal. There is no coverage of the underground and very little real rock criticism. In fairness, there is probably no desire among the editorial staff to aspire to anything greater. The magazine aims squarely at the teen audience who consider hard rock to be largely an exercise in fashion. Tough job, huh?

HIT PARADER

Dubbed "cheap looking" in last year's audit by colleague Art Roberts, *HP* still holds down the top spot in ugliness. Although it is much in the same vein as *Circus*, a slight taint of broadmindedness appears to be creeping in, disguised as an indie reviews column.

In addition, the issue I was reading had a few interesting moments. To wit: Andy

Secher being an apologist for Vince "Fatty Arbuckle" Neil in the fan mail column, Blackie Lawless's guest editorializing on the presumed Hitlerian threat of the PMRC, and Armored Saint's record smashing ritual. These pieces were refreshingly humorous and, intentional or not, *HP* ought to aim for more of this type of zaniness.

ROCK SCENE

Would you believe managing editor Kenny Kerner useta be a lyricist or somethin' for the cool hepcats in Dust? No? Well, would you believe editor-in-chief Beth Nussbaum is this month's recipient of the Jaan Uhelszki Rock Criticism Award given to the journalist who generates the greatest number of boring Q&A interviews? Certainly!

My question is simple: Why should anyone muster up the energy and bucks to purchase this mag if the head honcho can't find the time to write a decent article? Stick to photography, Beth.

ROCK BEAT

What do you make of a magazine that can't make up its mind about the correct spelling of one of its primary contributors (Debi/Debbie Metal)? Is it stupid? Fickle? Time to fire the copy editor?

I dunno. I do know that this is the only metal mag with contributors who are 100 percent distaff. That's interesting.

If you're under 14, "Check it out, it's cool!" If not, pass.

BLAST

Pay attention! *Blast* is the absolute pits. They say that they used to be *Record Review*. I think that they might be lying because even that publication (lame as it was) was superior to this one.

The only story that was almost interesting in this issue was "Motley Crue Attacked On The Road!" "Gosh!" I said to myself. "Attacked by what? Wild peccaries?" Nah, it was only those pesky rock critics.

The rest of *Blast* carries on in a similar somnolent fashion, except for the personals section, where young girls send in fetching pictures of themselves along with their addresses. That was stylistically similar to the tail section of a smut tabloid.

RIP

If you're a well-read kinda guy (like me), this mag probably reminds you of *Hustler*. It should. It's produced by Larry Flynt Publications. That means it's not boring, which is more than can be said for any of the others I've mentioned so far.

Of special interest is an asset which, to my knowledge, no other metal mag can boast of—the *RIP* girls. What is their function? Perhaps METAL should authorize a fact-finding mission? Hmmm?

Photos by Bill Frankhauser

Aside from the pretty girls, the rest of this mag is a very up-and-down affair. In theory, the acquisition of Ted Nugent's mom as an advice columnist coulda been a stroke of genius. In practice, it's a letdown. The "Idol Chatter" column claims to be revolutionary in that it lets the "stars" speak for themselves. In reality, it's just another excuse for those lame Q&A interviews. There's also a tendency to publish filler, as demonstrated by the high school ramblings of some gloop named Wigger.

On the plus side, *RIP* features great pix, plenty of indie coverage, and a boorish sense of humor which is totally appropriate. There has certainly been improvement since last year, when our critique issued 'em a death sentence. Maybe *RIP* is your cup of tea.

KERRANG

Ahhh, now we be gettin' to the good stuff. *Kerrang* sports a well-deserved reputation as the flagship of European hard rock publications, backed up by comprehensive coverage and a unique beer-soaked editorial attitude. Much credit has to go to the wealth of contributors who (in the reviews section at least) resist pigeonholing and judge bands on their own merit.

Kerrang will also go to great lengths to bring home the goods. For example, it was they who found out in a recent issue what had become of Uriah Heep. A reporter was sent deep into the Soviet Union to find that, although Mick Box and company had been banished from the majority of the western world, they were well and touring behind the Iron Curtain. Solid evidence that *Kerrang* cares!

METAL RENDEZVOUS INTERNATIONAL

Talk is cheap in metal and that tenet is best exemplified by *MRI*. Billing itself as "America's Ultimate Heavy Rock Magazine," the editors deliver little to back up that grandiose claim. The big problem is that the whole tone of the mag is lifeless and boring. After reading a mere two paragraphs of the guest editorial by Robert "Theologian of Metal" Sweet, *MRI* fell from my Morpheus-weakened fingers and formed a perfect tent over my snoring nose!

METAL FORCES

MF is great because of its editorial staff—a diverse bunch of guys who have no qualms with insulting each other and bickering over personal taste. That friction results in humorous and exciting

coverage of developing underground acts. Even if you don't always agree with 'em, you will get a kick out of *MF*. Additional bonus points garnered for including an idiotic poster of M.O.D., spattered with animal blood, which is transcendent in its tastelessness. And isn't that what metal's all about?

AARDSCHOCK AMERICA

Translating as "earthquake," *AA* is, in actuality, a fanzine. That means it is, at best, an exercise in inspired amateurism. There's nothing wrong with that—I'll take cut-and-paste layout and clumsy writin' anytime over slick mainstream wastes of paper if the editors can deliver real substance—as they do at *AA*.

Their underground reporting is second to none and no little thanks for that must be given to Ron Quintana and his San Francisco scene report. With his genial and easy style, Ron manages to draw the reader into the heart of power metal country and its fast-paced developments. He makes you wish you were there!

POWERLINE

Hailing from Connecticut, *Powerline* is a fanzine that should be part of every metal fan's shopping list. Their layout and typeset should be required examples for anyone contemplating starting a 'zine and are especially appreciated by me and my tired eyes.

However, ya read a 'zine for content and *Powerline*'s got plenty of that, too, ranging from a *big* Gene Simmons interview to the revelation that Joe Satriani digs Venom, Celtic Frost and Mercyful Fate—info that scoops all the other guitar mags which have been doin' glossy color spreads on 'im. You get an Exodus flexi, too. Address: P.O.B. 4426, Stamford, CT 06907-0426.

LOUD

Any fanzine that digs up bands with names like Mysto Dysto and Rabid Rabbit and bills 'em alongside major label biggies like the Cult and Faster Pussycat deserves your attention. Even the mighty Ron Jim Dio calls to spill his guts to someone by the name of Fill Dirt! Buy! Address: P.O.B. 56425, Phoenix, AZ 85079.

GUITAR WORLD

It's obvious that *GW* is a mag devoted exclusively to guitars and guitarists and that guarantees that there's gonna be a lot of hard rock info packed within its pages. Since I play guitar, too, it's nice to be able to go to a mag with guitar playin' reporters who are able to dig into the mechanics of metal when interviewing their subjects. *GW* is extremely colorful and, of all the guitar mags, almost exclusively devoted to hard rock. I like it so much that I even recommend it to fans who don't play guitar. I'd bet a month's salary that they'd dig it, too.

Recent issues have featured coverboys Michael Schenker and Joe Perry and include a special edition focusing solely on one of the great fathers of metal, Jimi Hendrix.

GUITAR PLAYER

GP is the grandfather of the guitar mags and is so substantial that if you threw it at someone and it hit 'em in the mouth it would probably knock out their teeth. They'll cover anyone from Eugene Chadbourne to Steve Vai and, in between, you get to find out what a Gravikord is and how to play upside-down guitar *ala* Chet Thompson of Hellion. They can also boast of the mighty Jas Obrecht, a journalist who has made an impressive career out of interviewing metal guitar heroes.

The only reason that I pay more attention to their competitor, *GW*, is that its metal/total content ratio is higher. That tells ya that although I'm narrow-minded, the editors at *GP* certainly are not.

METAL

You probably think it's pretty self-serving for METAL to be reviewed within its own pages, and you might be right. But there are still some real good reasons why its one of the mags by which all of these other rags should be measured. The best of these is that there's a lower "dope quotient" among its contributors than at any of its competitors. F'r instance, it's easy to point to Judy Wieder's insightful and ongoing questioning of Michael Sweet of Stryper on topics which range from God and man to AIDS. His replies have convinced me (and should have convinced anyone else) that the man has enough trouble interpreting his own thoughts, let alone the teachings of Jesus. Thanks, Judy.

METAL can also brag about its unique "Reader's Reviews," the finest letter forum in the genre, and plenty o' special features like this one. Long may it be published.

* * *

And there you have it. A veritable cornucopia of choice metal mags fit to adorn your coffee table and a couple designed just for the bird cage. You need never be at a loss for timely metal data again. ▣

Photo by Bill Frankhauser

THE SECRETS OF AMERICA'S MOST POPULAR SPORTS ENTERTAINMENT REVEALED FOR THE VERY FIRST TIME!
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CREDIT CARD ORDERS CALL

by Teri Saccone

Ozzy Osbourne is really just an ordinary guy. Honestly. While holed up with his wife and kids in a New York hotel suite to do press for his newly-acquired guitarist, Zakk Wylde, he wears a rather disreputable set of sweats—hardly showbiz gear. He mentions the possibility of buying a home in Connecticut. He drinks bottled water and looks forward to going shopping for the kids in the city later. And deep down, Ozzy confesses to being a rather insecure person. All in all, probably not quite what you might expect.

So this is the guy parents fear and conservatives deplore? The supposed nutcase from whom small winged mammals flee? If you ask me, Ozzy is just a pussycat. Your average working-class stiff from Birmingham, England who hasn't forgotten where his roots are. Sure he's a "rock star," but there's still some scrappy, corner-pub attitude left in his personality that transcends the ridiculous persona. And he is (to some of us, I guess) a really nice guy.

* * *

You took quite a risk in picking a comparative unknown in Zakk Wylde.

Sometimes I think to myself "Someday, Ozzy, your luck is gonna run out." You're gonna get a right nerd up there. You're gonna get someone who's gonna fall on his face one day and say "I can't do it." That's always a worry I have. When Randy died, I got this other guy called Bernie to stand in temporarily while I was looking for another guitar player. And he froze when he got onstage and went "God, I can't do it." But that's always a gamble you gotta take. But with Zakk, we did this mini-tour of prisons in England. The prisons over there allow once-a-year concerts, so we did it because it was a good time to see what Zakk was about. We figured if he screwed up in there, no one was really gonna know about it. So, it worked out fine. He's got this fire inside of him like a volcano ready to explode. The only problem that I'm kind of scared of with Zakk is that he's like a race horse—he wants to run everywhere, he never stops to think what he's running into, which only experience and time will put in order. But he's a fabulous player. I'm really excited. Scared, but excited.

How about the songwriting, the collaboration?

Together, we've written about 15 songs over the last four months. It's really interesting because when he came along he knew my history better than I did. he could play old Sabbath licks and I would be like "I don't remember that one." He knows everything that I've done so I don't have to teach him about my history—like what solo was played on the third song on the *Blizzard Of Oz* LP. He's done his homework, which is very admirable. It's enough to learn the new material, besides, I don't have a clue of what key anything is in."

And Zakk jogs your memory?

Oh yeah, it's good for me. And people always say "Why do you always pick young guys?" It's because they'll tell you what the *kids* want. They'll say to me "Hey, you can't do that. It's too jazzy. I'm not playing that shit." And it's good, because it keeps me in touch. Another thing with getting older people is that I don't want to start battling around with an ego because the older guy has been around and has got a name. The chemistry starts to get fucked up and they think you're ripping them off and so on. It's great to get a young guy who wants to be the best rather than an old guy who thinks he's already the best. And when they think they're the best then they stop progressing.

Have you kept up on Jake's progress of late?

I understand that Jake's doing his own

Photo by Tony Mottram/Retna Ltd.

ANTI-CHRIST OR AUNTIE MAME

thing—and I wish him all the luck in the world. I don't wish him any harm, I still love the guy a great deal—it's just that it came to be an impossible situation for me to work with him anymore. We were just sort of sitting there looking at each other with nothing to do anymore. And the fire had gone out for me.

It's been said before that a lot of the best bands truly detest one another as human beings.

Well I always got back to what I call "That Old Black Sabbath Feeling," in the respect that when we used to work together, we'd turn up at the studio and I couldn't stand to look at this one and he couldn't stand to look at him, but we knew we had to do it because we were *Black Sabbath* and we had a commitment to get another fucking album out and bore the shit out of each other. We weren't working as a unit anymore. So now, when I get "That Old Black Sabbath Feeling," I've got to change it, because a day lost is a day you ain't gonna get back again. And I'm always battling the misery head where I start thinking it's all over, I can't do it anymore. And there are times when that has to do with the people around you. I'm one of those guys who'll do anything to avoid telling somebody to their face that it's not working out. So it stays there, festering, until it eventually gets bigger and bigger and then you've got to get that out of your life or it will destroy you.

So you get bouts of insecurity?

Every album I've ever done I'll go "It's all over, man. I can't sing anymore." (*laughs*) And I'll always turn to the guys and say that I haven't got any new ideas. And they'll go "Here we go again." You always want to top your last hit, and you think "How can I get bigger than that? How can I get better than that?" And if you go with your feelings instead of that, you do alright. I mean, I'm the most defeatist person you'll ever meet. I always think "They're gonna hate this, it's crap, it's useless." I'm never happy. My wife can come in with the crown jewels and five platinum albums and I still wouldn't be happy. I don't know, I must like pain. I must like being miserable.

At the end of the day, it's true to say that Jake and I did a lot of things together, but we never communicated with each other, you know?

But you communicated musically so couldn't you try to work out the personal strife?

No, because even *there* it was getting into a ridiculous situation. I kept feeling as if I'd done something drastically wrong all the time. I'd say "What have I done to upset you, Jake? What's the problem?" And then I'd start thinking I was going fucking crazy cause I'm suspecting the worst all the time. And the situation was that we *had* to separate. And he really didn't like my drinking and my craziness and we became different people. I know he'll do well, Jake will. No doubt in my mind that he will.

So you're saying that it was an amicable split-up?

It's exactly the same as being married. And I know so many couples who don't really love each other's company, but they stay together because they're married and they have to do their daily boring bit. I think life's too short to be like that. All you're doing is wasting time and energy.

Let's talk about your work with ex-Black Sabbath drummer Bill Ward. You've done two tracks on his upcoming album. What was that like?

By the end of Sabbath, we had all given up on Bill. We thought we were gonna be puttin' flowers on his box in a week. He was crazy, just trying to kill himself back then.

Can't say I'd blame him, what with all the strange people in that band that he had to deal with.

Well now he's a recovering alcoholic—he doesn't drink or take anything any-

more—and he phoned me up and asked me to play on his album. Now I was thinking it was gonna be like acid-psycho music or something, but I heard his tapes and I was fucking floored. I couldn't believe it. It's really interesting stuff. Honest to God, I never realized how talented he was. It's unexplainable stuff—really listenable, though.

Heavy stuff?

Very heavy, yeah. It's kinda like a heavier Pink Floyd type of thing. I wish that guy all the luck in the world. He was in a *terrible* state for a long while. Now he's really happy. Cause at the end of the day with Sabbath, we were all bloody miserable people. We became as black as Sabbath got.

I mean, I understand that Tony has released another "Black Sabbath" album, I think the title is *Eternal Idol* or something, but, he's taken the name to the depths of despair now. And he changes band members every day.

What was the outcome of that lawsuit that the rest of the band filed against Iommi over who legally owned the name "Black Sabbath"?

Every week we were suing each other. I really have a hard time keeping track of all that. It got insane. It was so crazy. I got served (with papers) at Live Aid by my father-in-law, who was then managing Black Sabbath. It freaked me out because I hadn't seen the guys for the best part of six years, I do one gig after all that time—Live Aid, which is a good cause—and I'm the *only* guy there who gets served (*laughs*). And it must have cost me $15,000 to fight the lawsuit.

Getting back to the upcoming album, is it going to be similar to* The Ultimate Sin *which was perceived as being a bit more serious in subject matter than a lot of your material.

It's gonna be more fantasy stuff—heavy fantasy.

You don't mean dragon-slaying and all that kind of thing?

No! None of that *Alice In Wonderland* sort of crap! Ronnie Dio does all that. Have you noticed that a lot of metal bands sing about fires, dragons and wishing wells? Where is the connection between heavy metal guitarwork and swords and shields? I don't understand the trend.

Yeah, but you're considered a progenitor of that whole trend. You helped start it.

I started that *years* ago. And then it was the spandex era, then the scarves, then the headbands. It's like as soon as one does it, they all follow. But with the *Ultimate Sin*, there was no serious political intention behind it. It offends me to a point when certain bands get up there and use their fame for politics. It's just *entertainment*, that's all I'm doing.

No messages at all?

A certain personal message, but I don't want to preach on records like U2. I don't know what I'm talking about when it

Photos by Mark Weiss/MVA

Nick Elgar/London Features Intl.

comes to that anyway. All I want to do is make people enjoy themselves when they listen to my records or go to my shows and that's the end of it. When the microphone is turned off I go to bed.

***But you must realize it doesn't end there for the fans. Some of them really feel they live* through you.**

That's just part of rock 'n' roll. I mean, I was the biggest Beatle fan who ever walked the earth. I used to fantasize that Paul McCartney would marry my sister and I used to think "I bet Ringo's a real cool guy." It's just fantasizing. I know I have a responsibility to my fans, but I also have a responsibility to me, and I can't be Ozzy Osbourne 24 hours a day.

So where is Ozzy Osbourne going?

I'm stumped for a title for the first time in my career. I had *Diary Of A Madman*, *Bark At The Moon*, *The Ultimate Sin* all before I did the albums. But now I'm trying to have a transition period. I'm sick of fangs, blood, snot and gore. The bad thing about heavy metal is that it's musically limiting. Musically, I want to expand al over the place without going avant garde. Because I'm stamped heavy metal right through the middle—no matter what I do, even if it's a ballad like "So Tired"—it's gonna be considered heavy. If I do an opera, it's gonna be branded a *heavy metal* opera. I want to try something a bit different because I want to make myself happy, but I can't go far from what the audience wants or expects. ▣

IRON MAIDEN IN SE

by Judy Wieder

Bruce Dickinson, head howler for the mighty Iron Maiden, lifts his muscular body off his living room couch in Bonn, Germany and reluctantly shuts off the television.

"I'd really gotten into some re-run from America, but that's alright," he says, giving the set one last look. "I'd rather talk to you."

If the truth be told about Maiden's international fencing champion (in West Germany to enter one of the occasional tournaments he competes in), Bruce would rather talk . . . period. The only non-Cockney Ironman (he's from Sheffield, in the north) has definitely got the gift of gab. Ask him absolutely anything and he's gone for hours. The one-time lead singer for Samson, who leaped aboard for a Maiden voyage when vocalist Paul Di'Anno jumped ship, loves nothing better than a bottle of ale, a pile of Mars Bars and some kind of subject matter to sink his conversation skills into. Within moments we had one . . .

"Tell me about the new album," I ventured.

Take it, Bruce:

"The new album!! Oh, it's fantastic. It's a concept album. It's called *Seventh Son Of A Seventh Son*. See, Jesus Christ was the seventh son of a seventh son. This album is Iron Maiden's seventh album. We've had seven Eddies. Isn't it amazing?

"Traditionally, the number seven has been a mystical number. The seventh son of a seventh son is always supposed to be clairvoyant. He's supposed to have clairvoyant powers, healing powers and all kinds of things like that.

"Our album is about the birth of the

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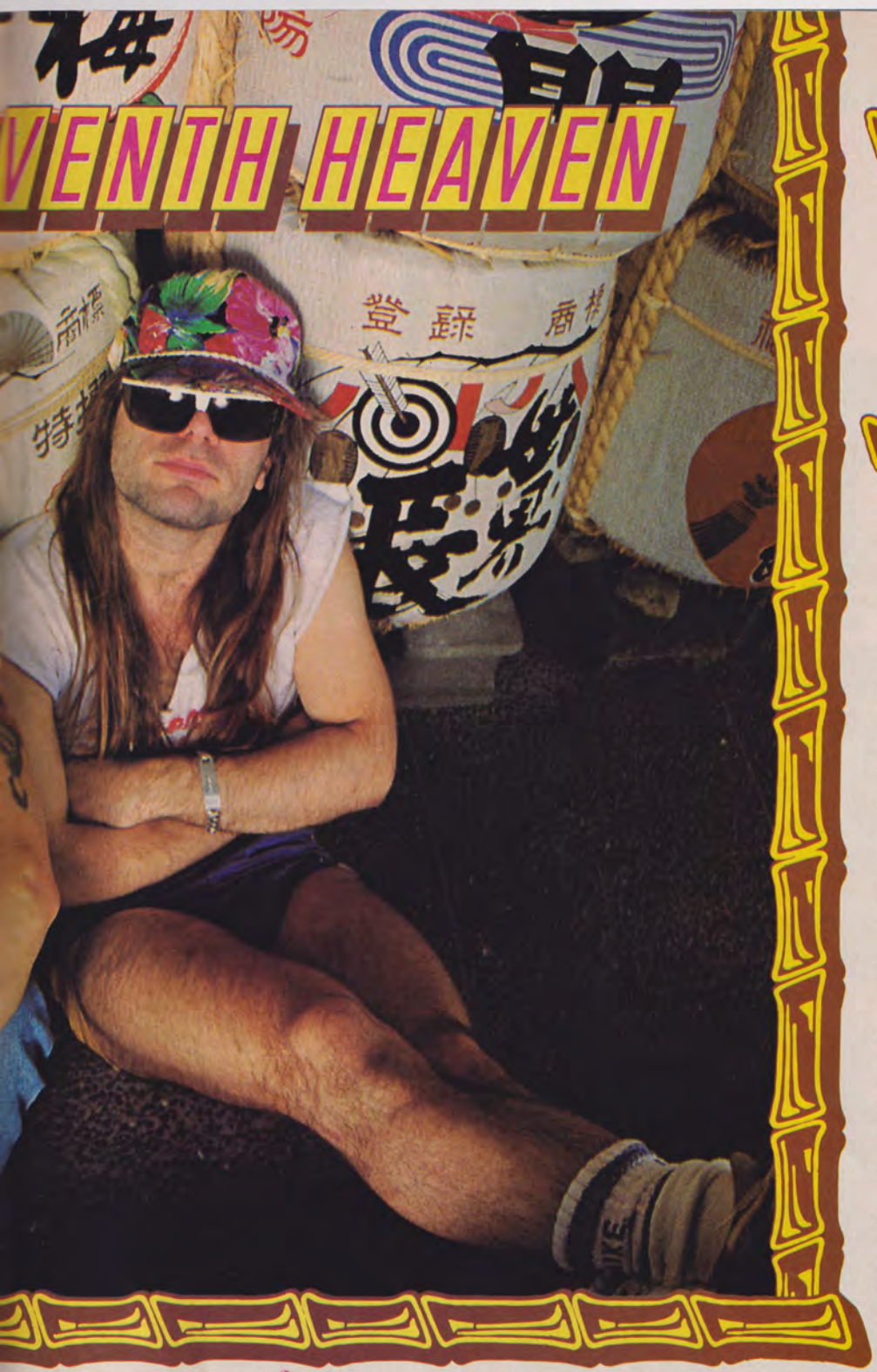

"Jesus Christ was the seventh son of a seventh son..."

seventh son of a seventh son. It's about how both God and the devil battle it out for his soul. They both want it, but neither of them can actually take it from him because he's got free will. He can choose, but at the same time nobody can really help him because he is completely on his own.

"The seventh son is special and he knows it," Dickinson continues breathlessly. "But he doesn't know exactly what he is. All through his lifetime the devil flings all kinds of things at him. He sends down the devil's daughter to seduce him. When he loses his virginity with her, he wakes up the next day only to realize that he's been used. He feels real bad about that and has all kinds of nightmares and dreams trying to figure it out.

"The single is called 'Can I Play With Madness?' and the hero goes to a fortune teller to ask that question. It will be a big moment in the live show. After he sings that song, the fortune teller looks into his crystal ball, but he can't see anything. It's really strange. He tells the seventh son: 'I can't see anything for you. There's nothing.' This really freaks the hero out and he goes crazy and grabs the fortune teller. Eventually the guy tells him: 'OK, son, here's what it is: You're going to burn.'

"That's the end of side one," Bruce explains. "Then when side two continues, he realizes that *he* is clairvoyant. What happens is that he sees some terrible catastrophe that is going to befall a village and he runs to warn them about it. Of course, they don't believe him. But when it does actually happen, they blame him! They're furious and they throw him out of town. They say that it is his fault and that somehow he caused the disaster to happen to them.

"By this time, he is pretty shaken. The last song he sings is, 'Only The Good Die Young (But The Evil Seem To Live Forever).' The tragedy of the whole thing is that he can see everything except his own future. So during this last song, he sits down and sort of lays into mankind and all the hypocrisy and everything. He says: 'Frankly, having been down here, you stink, the lot of you. And having seen what's in my dreams, and what things could be like, I think I'll take my dreams.'

"Then he kills himself!" Bruce yells, giving away the surprise ending. "But the kick-back is, because he kills himself, the devil gets him in the end. See, in the song that opens the album, 'Moonchild,' the devil says: '*If you die by your own hand/As a suicide you shall be damned/If you try to save your soul/I shall torment you/And you won't grow old/With every second of passing breath/You'll be alone/Your soul will bleed to death/...*' So, you see, he's a pretty nasty guy!"

So did you write those lyrics?

"Yeah!" the macho poet beams proudly. "Please quote them, with my permission. Also, there's some lines in 'Only The Good Die Young' that I really like and would like to leave you with:

" '*Walking on water?/Are miracles all you can trust?/Does it measure up to your lust?/Yes, I think I'll leave you now/With your Bishops and your guilt/So until next time—have a good sin!...*' " ◙

Born Under A Bad Sign

"First things first—the deposed Ozzy has gotta go. His recent passivity has allowed the dreaded glam movement to permeate the consciousness of right-thinking metal fans everywhere, so we're making him listen to Tony Iommi's Black Sabbath LPs until he comes to his senses."

"Blessed Death don't really pose a threat, but they *are* ugly, and we found pocket-size copies of *Decorum* by Miss Manners in all of their shorts. Naturally, I've sent them to the Metal Institution for the Criminally Urbane."

"I was gonna let the mighty Metallica stay until I found out that James Hetfield denied one of the guys in Great White a friendly autograph request. There's no room for egos in *my* land o' METAL—so James and the other Metallicatz have been stripped of their Evelyn Wood Speed Riffing cards until further notice."

"Despite what you may have heard to the contrary, the rumors about me retaining the Great Kat as my personal love kitten are completely unconsummated... but I'm working on it."

"Gang Green are just plain cool, so I gave 'em this vintage Corvette to replace their skateboards. I found out later that none of them know how to drive, but they get a real charge out of standing around it and striking sexy poses when chicks walk by."

"I've banished Toxik to a *very small* island of rocks in the West Indies. Sure, they act tough when it's still light outside, but when the sun goes down they start whimpering something awful."

"Graciously, I've decided to give the New Monkees another chance—this time as a wicked thrash outfit. They wanted to change thier name to the Grateful Primates, but I've opted for *Motley Crue* instead! Whatta groove!"

"Znowhite, by way of punishment for their silly name, will play the rest of their gigs in Fantasyland, with the added stipulation that Happy and Grumpy occasionally sit in on congas."

"We've traded Whiplash straight across the board for *E-Z-O* and a couple of utility outfielders."

"Kingdome Come, my ass—I am the true Messiah! But just to avoid confusion, I've sent them to the Chasm of Eternal Darkness, where the crawling riff from Led Zeppelin's 'Kashmir' plays forevermore."

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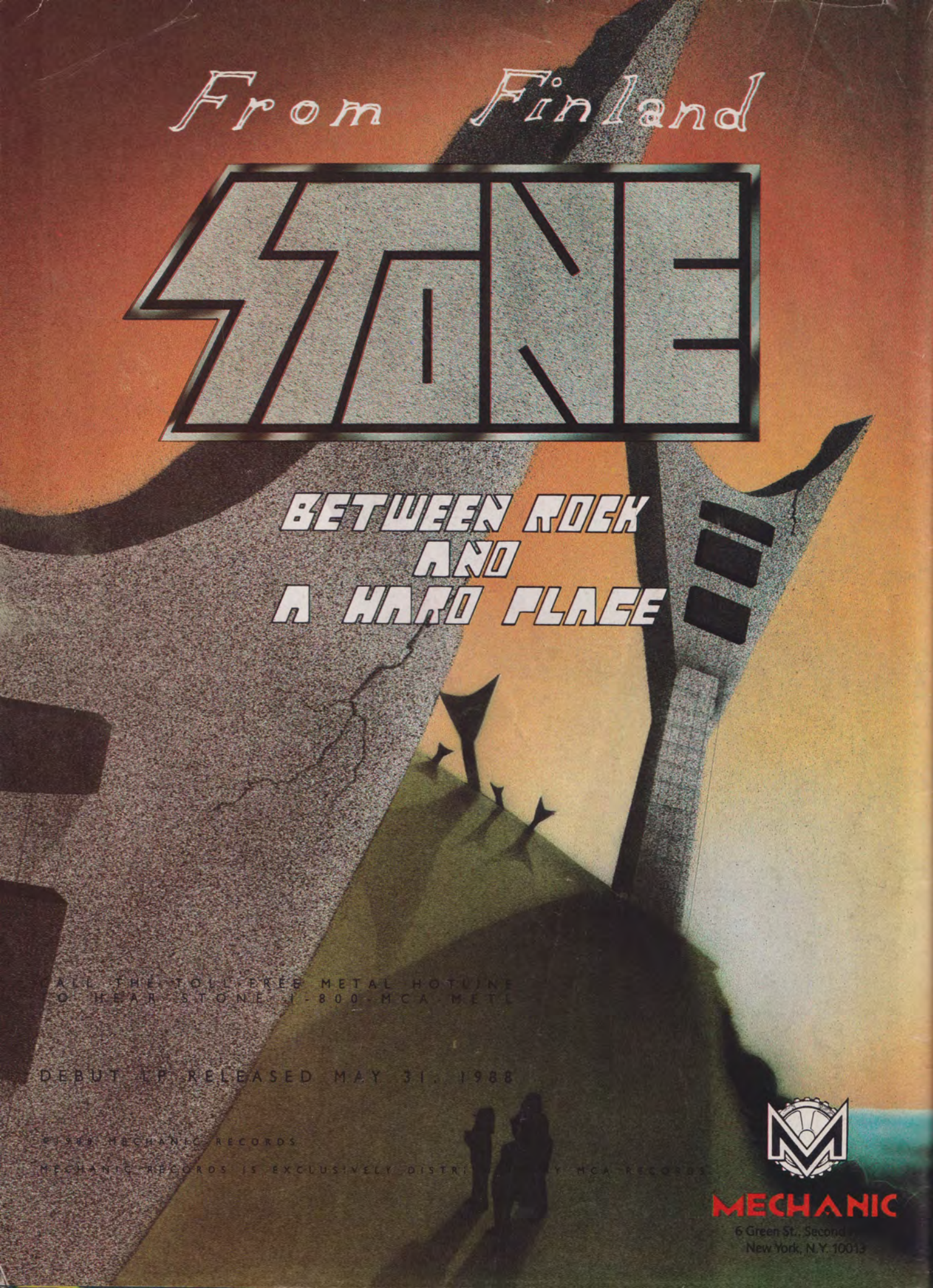
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